











THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIANITY



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# THE PROBLEM OF CHRISTIANITY

LECTURES DELIVERED AT THE LOWELL  
INSTITUTE IN BOSTON, AND AT MAN-  
CHESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD

BY

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VOLUME I

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF LIFE

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To  
THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD  
I GRATEFULLY DEDICATE  
THIS BOOK

"This book," says the author "has no  
positive views to maintain regarding  
the Persian cycle founded by Chushtak  
XXVI.



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## PREFACE

THE present book is the result of studies whose first outcome appeared, in 1908, in my "Philosophy of Loyalty." Since then, two volumes of my collected philosophical essays have dealt, in part, with the same problems as those which "The Philosophy of Loyalty" discussed. Of these two latter volumes, one is entitled "William James and other Essays on the Philosophy of Life"; and contains, amongst other theses, the assertion that the "spirit of loyalty" is able to supply us not only with a "philosophy of life," but with a religion which is "free from superstition" and which is in harmony with a genuinely rational view of the world. In 1912 were published, by the Scribners in New York, the "Bross Lectures," which I had delivered, in the autumn of 1911, at Lake Forest University, Illinois, on "The Sources of Religious Insight." One of these "Bross Lectures" was entitled "The Religion of

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Loyalty"; and the volume in question contained the promise that, in a future discussion, I would, if possible, attempt to "apply the principles" there laid down to the special case of Christianity. The present work redeems that promise according to the best of my ability.

### I

The task of these two volumes is defined in the opening lecture of the first volume. The main results are carefully summed up in Lectures XV and XVI, at the close of the second volume. This book can be understood without any previous reading of my "Philosophy of Loyalty," and without any acquaintance with my "Bross Lectures." Yet in case my reader finds himself totally at variance with the interpretation of Christianity here expounded, he should not finally condemn my book without taking the trouble to compare its principal theses with those which my various preliminary studies of "loyalty," and of the religion of loyalty, contain.

In brief, since 1908, my "philosophy of



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loyalty" has been growing. Its successive expressions, as I believe, form a consistent body of ethical as well as of religious opinion and teaching, verifiable, in its main outlines, in terms of human experience, and capable of furnishing a foundation for a defensible form of metaphysical idealism. But the depth and vitality of the ideal of loyalty have become better known to me as I have gone on with my work. Each of my efforts to express what I have found in the course of my study of what loyalty means has contained, as I believe, some new results. My efforts to grasp and to expound the "religion of loyalty" have at length led me, in this book, to views concerning the essence of Christianity such that, if they have any truth, they need to be carefully considered. For they are, in certain essential respects, novel views; and they concern the central life-problems of all of us.

## II

What these relatively novel opinions are, the reader may, if he chooses, discover for

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himself. If he is minded to undertake the task, he will be aided by beginning with the "Introduction," which immediately follows the "Table of Contents" in the first volume of this book. This introduction contains an outline of the lectures, — an outline which was used, by my audience, when the text of this discussion was read at Manchester College, Oxford, between January 13 and March 6, 1913.

But a further brief and preliminary indication is here in order to prepare the reader a little better for what is to follow.

This book is not the work of an historian, nor yet of a technical theologian. It is the outcome of my own philosophical study of certain problems belonging to ethics, to religious experience, and to general philosophy. In spirit I believe my present book to be in essential harmony with the bases of the philosophical idealism set forth in various earlier volumes of my own, and especially in the work entitled "The World and the Individual" (published in 1899–1901). On the other hand, the present work contains no

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mere repetition of my former expressions of opinion. There is much in it which I did not expect to say when I began the task here accomplished. As to certain metaphysical opinions which are stated, in outline, in the second volume of this book, I now owe much more to our great and unduly neglected American logician, Mr. Charles Peirce, than I do to the common tradition of recent idealism, and certainly very much more than I ever have owed, at any point of my own philosophical development, to the doctrines which, with technical accuracy, can be justly attributed to Hegel. [It is time, I think, that the long customary, but unjust and loose usage of the adjective "Hegelian" should be dropped. The genuinely Hegelian views were the ones stated by Hegel himself, and by his early followers. My own interpretation of Christianity, in these volumes, despite certain agreements with the classical Hegelian theses, differs from that of Hegel, and of the classical Hegelian school, in important ways which I can, with a clear conscience, all the more vigorously emphasize,

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just because I have, all my life, endeavored to treat Hegel both with careful historical justice and with genuine appreciation. In fact the present is a distinctly new interpretation of the "Problem of Christianity."

One of the most thoughtful and one of the fairest of the reviewers of my "Spirit of Modern Philosophy" said of my former position, as stated, in 1892, in the book thus named, that I then came nearer to being a follower of Schopenhauer than a disciple of Hegel. As far as it went this statement gave a just impression of how I then stood. I have never, since then, been more of an Hegelian than at that time I was. I am now less so than ever before.

### III

One favorite and facile way of disposing of a student of idealistic philosophy who writes about religion is to say that he has first formed a system of "abstract conceptions," whose interest, if they have any interest, is purely technical, and whose relation to the concrete religious concerns of man-

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kind is wholly external and formal; and that he has then tried to steal popular favor by misusing traditional religious phraseology, and by identifying his "sterile intellectualism," and these his barren technicalities, with the religious beliefs and experiences of mankind, through taking a vicious advantage of ambiguous words.

I can only ask any one who approaches this book to read Volume I before he undertakes to judge the metaphysical discussions which form the bulk of Volume II; and also to weigh the relations between my metaphysical and my religious phraseology in the light of the summary contained in Lectures XV and XVI of the second volume.

If after such a reading of my actual opinions, as set down in this book, he still insists that I have endeavored artificially to force a set of foreign and preconceived metaphysical "abstractions" upon the genuine religious life of my brethren, I cannot supply him with fairness of estimate, but ought to remain indifferent to his manner of speech.

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As a fact, this book is the outcome of experience, and, in its somewhat extended practical sections, it is written (if I may borrow a phrase from the Polish master of romance, Sienkiewicz), "for the strengthening of hearts." That some portions of the discussion are technically metaphysical is a result of the deliberate plan of the whole work; and technical assertions demand, as a matter of course, technical criticisms. The novelty of some of my metaphysical theses in my second volume, and the lack of space for their adequate statement in this book, have made their exposition, as I here have time to give it, both incomplete, and justly subject to many objections, some of which I have anticipated in my text. But, in any case, I have not been merely telling anybody's old story over again.

Since I have been writing from the life, I of course owe a great deal to the inspiration that I long ago obtained from William James's "Varieties of Religious Experience." I even venture to hope that (while I have of course laid stress upon no interests which I could



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recognize as due to merely private concerns of my own) I might still be addressing at least some few readers who are able to understand, and perhaps sometimes to echo, a cry of genuine feeling when they hear it. For, after all, it is more important that we should together recognize in religion our own common personal needs and life-interests than that we should agree about our formulas. So I have indeed tried, in this book, to speak as one wanderer speaks to another who is his friend, when the way is long and obscure.

Yet in one very important respect the religious experience upon which, in this book, I most depend, differs very profoundly from that whose "varieties" James described. He deliberately confined himself to the religious experience of individuals. My main topic is a form of social religious experience, namely, that form which, in ideal, the Apostle Paul viewed as the experience of the Church. This social form of experience is that upon which loyalty depends. James supposed that the religious experience of a church must

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needs be "conventional," and consequently must be lacking in depth and in sincerity.

This, to my mind, was a profound and a momentous error in the whole religious philosophy of our greatest American master in the study of the psychology of religious experience. All experience must be *at least* individual experience; but unless it is *also* social experience, and unless the whole religious community which is in question unites to share it, this experience is but as sounding brass, and as a tinkling cymbal. This truth is what Paul saw. This is the rock upon which the true and ideal church is built. This is the essence of Christianity.

If indeed I myself must cry "out of the depths" before the light can come to me, it must be my Community that, in the end, saves me. To assert this and to live this doctrine constitute the very core of Christian experience, and of the "Religion of Loyalty." In discussing "the varieties of religious experience," which here concern us, I have everywhere kept this thesis in mind.



## IV

The assertion just made summarizes the single thought to whose discussion, illustration, defence, and philosophy this book is devoted. This assertion is the one which, in my "Philosophy of Loyalty," I was trying, so far as I then could, to expound and to apply. We are saved, if at all, by devotion to the Community, in the sense of that term which these two volumes attempt to explain and to defend. This is what I mean by loyalty. Because the word "loyalty" ends in *ty*, and because what a "Community" is, is at present so ill understood by most philosophers, my former discussions of this topic have been accused of basing all the duties of life upon an artificial abstraction. When I now say that by loyalty I mean the *practically devoted love of an individual for a community*, I shall still leave unenlightened those who stop short at the purely verbal fact that the word "community" also ends in *ty*. But let such readers wait until they have at least read Lectures I, III, and VII of

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my first volume. Then they may know what is at issue.

This book, if it is nothing else, is at least one more effort to tell what loyalty is. I also want to put loyalty — this love of the individual for the community — where it actually belongs, not only at the heart of the virtues, not only at the summit of the mountains which the human spirit must climb if man is really to be saved, but also (where it equally belongs) at the turning-point of human history, — at the point when the Christian ideal was first defined, — and when the Church Universal, — that still invisible Community of all the faithful, that homeland of the human spirit, “which eager hearts expect,” was first introduced as a vision, as a hope, as a conscious longing to mankind. I want to show what loyalty is, and that all this is true of the loyal spirit.

Some of my main theses, in this book, are the following: First, Christianity is, in its essence, the most typical, and, so far in human history, the most highly developed religion of loyalty. Secondly, loyalty itself is a perfectly

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concrete form and interest of the spiritual life of mankind. Thirdly, this very fact about the meaning and the value of universal loyalty is one which the Apostle Paul learned in and from the social and religious life of the early Christian communities, and then enriched and transformed through his own work as missionary and teacher. Still another of my theses is this: Whatever may hereafter be the fortunes of Christian institutions, or of Christian traditions, the religion of loyalty, the doctrine of the salvation of the otherwise hopelessly lost individual through devotion to the life of the genuinely real and Universal Community, must survive, and must direct the future both of religion and of mankind, if man is to be saved at all. As to what the word "salvation" means, and as to why I use it, the reader can discover, if he chooses, from the text of these lectures.

## V

The doctrines of the Community, of Loyalty, of the "lost state of the natural individual," and of Atonement as the function in

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which the life of the community culminates, appear, in the volumes of this book, in two forms, whose clear distinction and close connection ought next to be emphasized in this preface. First, these doctrines, and the ideas in terms of which they are expressed, are verifiable results of the higher social religious experience of mankind. Were there no Christianity, were there no Christians in the world, all these ideas would be needed to express the meaning of true loyalty, the saving value of the right relation of any human individual to the community of which he is a member, and the true sense of life. These doctrines, then, need no dogmas of any historical church to define them, and no theology, and no technical metaphysical theory, to furnish a foundation for them. In the second place, however, these Christian ideas are based upon deep metaphysical truths whose significance is more than human.

Historically speaking, the Christian church first discovered the Christian ideas. The founder of Christianity, so far as we know

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what his teachings were, seems not to have defined them adequately. They first came to a relatively full statement through the religious life of the Pauline Churches; and the Pauline epistles contain their first, although still not quite complete, formulation. Paul himself was certainly not the founder of Christianity. But the Pauline communities first were conscious of the essence of Christianity.

Consequently those are right who have held, what the "modernists" of the Roman Church were for a time asserting,—before officialism turned its back, in characteristic fashion, upon the really new and deeply valuable light which these modernists were, for the time, bringing to their own communion. Those, I say, are right who have held that the Church, rather than the person of the founder, ought to be viewed as the central idea of Christianity.

On the other hand, neither the "modernists" of recent controversy, nor any other of the apologists for the traditions of the historical Christian church, have yet seen the meaning of the "religion of loyalty" as the

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Apostle Paul, in certain of his greatest moments and words, saw and expressed that meaning. The apostle's language, regarding this matter, is as imperishable as it is well warranted by human experience, and as it is also separable from the accidents of later dogmatic formulation, and inexhaustible in the metaphysical problems which it brings to our attention.

Hence the most significant task for a modern revision of our estimate of what is vital in Christianity depends upon the recognition of certain aspects of Christian social experience and of human destiny, aspects to whose exposition and defence, first in empirical terms, and then in the light of a reëxamination of certain fundamental metaphysical ideas, these two volumes are devoted.

The "Christian ideas" of the Church, of the lost state of man, of grace, and of atonement, are here discussed, first separately, and then in their natural union. In this examination, Pauline Christianity receives a prominence which I believe to be justified by the considerations which are emphasized



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in my text. After an extended discussion, in the second volume, of the "metaphysics of the Christian ideas," I return, at the conclusion of the whole research, to the relation of Christianity to our modern social experience, and to the problems of to-day.

The outcome of this method of dealing with "The Problem of Christianity" involves, I believe, not indeed a "solution," but a great simplification of the problems of Christology, of dogma in general, and of the relations between the true interests of philosophy upon the one side, and religion upon the other. The reader will somewhat dimly see the nature of the simplification in question when he reads Lecture I. In Lecture III, on the "Realm of Grace," he will begin to anticipate with greater clearness the characteristic outlines of my version of the "religion of loyalty." But not until Lectures XV and XVI will the outcome of the closely connected story to which, despite many episodes, the whole book is devoted, be ready for the reader's final judgment.

## VI

It is necessary still to forestall one fairly obvious criticism. Both "orthodox" and "liberal" Christianity, as they usually state their otherwise conflicting opinions, very commonly agree in making their different attempted solutions of the "Problem" of Christianity" depend upon the views which they respectively defend regarding the person of the founder of the faith. In Lecture VIII of the first volume, and in Lecture XVI of the second volume, I have summarized the little that I have to say about the person of the founder.

I cannot find in the ordinary "liberal" solution of the problem of the personality of Jesus, as Harnack, as Weinel, and as most "advanced liberal" discussions of our topic state that solution, anything satisfactory.

My principal reason for this dissatisfaction, when urged against the usual "liberal" view of the significance of the person of Jesus, is a novel, but, if I am right, a momentous reason. If Christianity is, in its inmost



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essence, the "religion of loyalty," the religion of that which in this book I have called "The Beloved Community," and if Pauline Christianity contained the essence of the only doctrine by which mankind, through devotion to the community, through loyalty, are to be saved, — then Buddhism is right in holding that the very form of the individual self is a necessary source of woe and of wrong. In that case, no individual human self can be saved except through ceasing to be a *mere* individual.

But if this be so, Harnack's view and the usual "liberal" view, to the effect that there was an ideally perfect human individual, whose example, or whose personal influence, involves a solution of the problem of human life, and is saving, — this whole view is an opinion essentially opposed to the deepest facts of human nature, and to the very essence of the "religion of loyalty." Not through imitating nor yet through loving any mere individual human being can we be saved, but only through loyalty to the "Beloved Community."

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Equally, however, must I decline to follow any of the various forms of traditionally orthodox dogma or theory regarding the person of Christ. Legends, doubtful historical hypotheses, and dogmas leave us, in this field, in well-known, and, to my mind, simply hopeless perplexities.

Hence this book has no positive thesis to maintain regarding the person of the founder of Christianity. I am not competent to settle any of the numerous historical doubts as to the founder's person, and as to the details of his life. The thesis of this book is that the essence of Christianity, as the Apostle Paul stated that essence, depends upon regarding the being which the early Christian Church believed itself to represent, and the being which I call, in this book, the "Beloved Community," as the true source, through loyalty, of the salvation of man. This doctrine I hold to be both empirically verifiable within the limits of our experience, and metaphysically defensible as an expression of the life and the spiritual significance of the whole universe.

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A distinguished authority upon Christology, who has kindly listened to some of my lectures, and who has kindly honored me with his criticism, points out to me, however, the final objection which I can here mention.

“You imagine,” he says, “that early Christianity depended, for the significance of its faith, upon the fact that a certain body of men, constituting the Pauline churches, were loyal to the spiritual unity, to the ideal charity, which, as they believed, the saving work of Christ had freely given to them, and to their community. But you speak of this early Christian community as if it were its own creator,—as if it grew up spontaneously, as if its form of saving and universal loyalty arose without any cause. Can you make religious history intelligible in this way? Who created the church? Who inspired the new loyalty? Was not the founder the cause of his church? How could the church have existed without its founder? Must not the founder have possessed, as an individual, a spiritual power equivalent to that which he exerted? Must it not then

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have been Jesus himself, and not the Community, — not the church, — which is the central source of Christianity? Otherwise does not your theory hang in the air? But if the founder really created this community and its loyalty, does not the whole meaning of the Christian religion once more centre in the founder, in his life, and in his person?"

I can here only reply to my kindly critic that this book (as Lecture III carefully points out) has *no* hypothesis whatever to offer as to how the Christian community originated. Personally I shall never hope, in my present existence, to know anything whatever about that origin, beyond the barest commonplaces. The historical evidence at hand is insufficient to tell us how the church originated. The legends do not solve the problem. I have a right to decline, and I actually decline to express an opinion as to any details about the person and life of the founder. For such an opinion the historical evidences are lacking, although it seems to me natural to suppose that the sayings and the parables which tradition attributed to the founder

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were the work of some single author, concerning whose life we probably possess some actually correct reports.

On the other hand, regarding the essence of the Christianity of the Pauline churches and concerning the actual life of those churches, we possess, in the Pauline epistles, information which is priceless, which reveals to us the religion of loyalty in its classic and universal form, and which involves the Christian ideas expounded, in my own poor way, in what here follows.

The transformation, not of historical, but of Christological, of ethical, and of religious ideas which would follow upon an adequate recognition of these simple considerations amply justifies the effort of one who undertakes, as I do, *not* to add to or to take away from early Christian history, and not to solve the problems of that history, but simply to expound the essence of the Christian doctrine of life, and the relation of the Christian ideas to the real world.

## VII

This preface must close with a few words of acknowledgment and of explanation.

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In 1911 the "President and Fellows of Harvard University" — a body which is also known as "The Corporation" — appointed me, for three years, holder of the endowment known as "The Cabot Fellowship," with the understanding that I should devote some of my time to study and research. In the beginning of 1912, when my work was, for a brief period, interrupted, the Harvard Corporation put me under an additional obligation, by granting me an extraordinary leave of absence. Since then, I have been allowed the opportunity not only to write these lectures, but to accept an offer made in the summer of 1912 by the Trustees of the "Hibbert Foundation" to deliver this entire course on "The Problem of Christianity" at Manchester College, Oxford; while the added generosity of President Lowell, who also acted, in this matter, as Trustee of the Lowell Institute in Boston, has enabled me to deliver the first part of the course (the discussions contained in Volume I of this book) as public lectures before the Lowell Institute in November and December of 1912.



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At Manchester College, on the "Hibbert Foundation," the lectures have been read between January 13 and March, 1913, and have thus continued throughout the whole of one Oxford term.

Seldom, then, has a student of philosophy been so much indebted to official and to personal kindness for the chance to perform such a task. I have heartily to thank the persons and authorities just mentioned, and to insist that, under such conditions, the faults of my book must be regarded as wholly my own, and judged sternly.

Prominent among the authors who have influenced my discussion of the idea of Atonement is the late Dr. R. C. Moberly, whose book on "Atonement and Personality" also had a deep effect upon my treatment of the idea of the Church. To Professor Sanday's "Christologies, Ancient and Modern" I owe a great debt. Dinsmore's "Atonement in Literature and Art" came into my hands only after my own discussion of Atonement had assumed definitive shape.

Among the friendly critics who have aided

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me in preparing my text, I ought to mention Professor E. C. Moore, Professor James Jackson Putnam, and Professor George H. Palmer of Harvard University. Professor Lawrence P. Jacks of Manchester College, Oxford, has helped me, from the beginning of my task, in ways which I cannot here acknowledge in any adequate fashion. I have also to acknowledge the assistance of Principal J. Estlin Carpenter, of Professor Charles M. Bakewell of Yale University, and of Dr. and Mrs. R. C. Cabot of Boston. Dr. J. Loewenberg has helped me not only with stimulating and sometimes decisively effective criticism of my lectures as they grew, but with other much-needed aid in preparing this book. Time would quite fail me to tell of the numerous other friends, both at home and in Oxford, who have accompanied, encouraged, and assisted my efforts.

JOSIAH ROYCE.

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS,

April 13, 1913.



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## INTRODUCTION

**W**HEN these lectures were delivered at Manchester College, Oxford, the hearers were supplied with the following outline under the general title: "Plan of Lectures on the Problem of Christianity." This plan is here repeated with its headings as they appeared on this printed programme.

### PRELIMINARY NOTE

**T**HESSE lectures are divided into two parts: Part I (Lectures I–VIII), on "THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF LIFE"; Part II (Lectures IX–XVI), on "THE REAL WORLD AND THE CHRISTIAN IDEAS."

Part I is a study of the human and empirical aspect of some of the leading and essential ideas of Christianity. Part II deals with the technically metaphysical problems to which these ideas give rise. Parts I and II are contrasted in their methods, the first part discussing religious experience, the second part dealing with its metaphysical foundations.

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The two parts, however, are closely connected in their purpose; and at the close, in Lectures XV and XVI, the relations between the metaphysical and the empirical aspects of the whole undertaking are reviewed.

The "Christian Ideas" which the lecturer proposes to treat as "leading and essential" are: (1) The Idea of the "Community" (historically represented by the Church); (2) The Idea of the "Lost State of the Natural Man"; (3) The Idea of "Atonement," together with the somewhat more general Idea of "Saving Grace."

Each of these ideas is, for the purposes of these lectures, to be generalized as well as interpreted. The "Community" exists, in human history, in countless different forms and grades, of which the visible and historical Christian Church is one instance. The ideal community in which, according to Christian doctrine, the Divine Spirit finds its expression, presents a problem which cannot be adequately treated without considering whether the whole universe is or is not, in some sense, both a community, and a divine being. The "lost state of the natural man" is a doctrine dependent upon the views about the nature

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of human individuality which are most characteristic of the Christian spirit.

Christianity has always been a religion, not only of Love, but of Loyalty. By loyalty is meant the thoroughgoing and loving devotion of an individual to a community. The "morally detached" individual, who has not found the community to which to be loyal, or who, having first found that community, has lost his relation to it through an act of deliberate disloyalty, is (according to such a religion) wholly unable, through any further individual deed of his own, to win or to regain the true goal of life. The ideas of "grace" and of "atonement" have to do with the question regarding the way in which the individual, whom no deed of his own (according to this religious view) can save or restore, can, nevertheless, be saved through a deed "*not* his own" — a deed which the community or which a servant of the community in whom its Spirit "fully dwells," may accomplish on behalf of the lost individual. In this fashion it is possible to indicate how our three Christian ideas may be and should be generalized for the purpose of the present lectures.

These three Christian ideas — that of the

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Community, of the Lost Individual, and of Atonement — have a close relation to a doctrine of life, which, when duly generalized, can be at least in part studied as a purely human “Philosophy of Loyalty,” and can be estimated in empirical terms, apart from any use of technical dogmas, and apart from any metaphysical opinion. The “Community” is the object to which loyalty is due. The “Lost State” is the state of those who have never found, or who, once finding, have then lost their loyalty. “Atonement” and “Divine Grace” may be considered as if they were expressions of the purely human process whereby the community seeks and saves, through its suffering servants and its Spirit, that which is lost.

Nevertheless, no purely empirical study of the Christian doctrine of life can, by itself, suffice to answer our main questions. It is indeed necessary to consider the basis in human nature which the religion of loyalty possesses, and to portray the relation of this religion to the social experience of mankind; and to this task the first part of these lectures is confined. But such a preliminary study sends us beyond itself.

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For each of the Christian ideas demands a further interpretation in terms of a theory of the real world. Religion can be experienced and lived apart from metaphysics; but (if we adapt Anselm's well-known use of a Scriptural word) we may say that whoever has learned what it is to "do the will" of the loyal spirit has a right to endeavor to "know the doctrine" which shall teach whether, and in what sense, the Spirit, the Community, and the process of salvation are genuine realities, transcending any of their human embodiments.

The task of the second part of these lectures is therefore to consider the neglected philosophical problem of the sense in which the community and its Spirit are realities. For this purpose a somewhat new form of Idealism, and, in particular, a new chapter in the theory of knowledge must be studied.

### TOPICS OF THE INDIVIDUAL LECTURES

#### PART I.—THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF LIFE

##### LECTURE I.—THE PROBLEM AND THE METHOD

The "Problem of Christianity" stated. The creed of the "modern man." The modern man



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and the "education of the human race." The methods to be employed in this study. Question: "In what sense, if in any, does the Divine Spirit dwell in the Church?" First glimpses of the course of the inquiry.

### LECTURE II. — THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSAL COMMUNITY

Tragic fortunes of great ideals especially exemplified by the history of the ideal of the Church. The conflict of spirit and letter. The basis of loyalty in human nature. The ideal of loyalty in its non-Christian forms. The Pauline development and transformation of the original doctrine of Christian love through the doctrine of charity in its relation to the Christian community.

### LECTURE III. — THE MORAL BURDEN OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Social aspects of the doctrine which is stated in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. "The Law" as a factor in the development of Self-consciousness. The natural and social cultivation of the conscience as a training in self-will. Modern illustrations of the process which was first observed by the Apostle. Individualism and collectivism. The community of hate and the community of love. The burden of the individual



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and the escape through the spirit of loyalty. The "new creature."

### LECTURE IV. — THE REALM OF GRACE

A further view of Christianity, as a Religion of Loyalty. Loyalty in its natural origin and in its genuinely spiritual forms. The doctrine of the "two levels" of human nature. The problem of the origin of the "beloved community" and of the beginnings of a "life in the spirit." Relations of Christian loyalty to the origins of Christian dogma. The Spirit *in* the Community, and the personal Spirit *of* the Community. The Founder and the problem of the "two natures." The "two natures" and the "two levels." Illustration from the Fourth Gospel.

### LECTURE V. — TIME AND GUILT

Matthew Arnold on Puritanism and on "getting rid of sin." Conflicts between the modern spirit and the doctrine of the "endless penalty" of sin. Reconsideration of these conflicts. The rational theory of the nature of "mortal sin." The relation of our acts to the whole time-process. Every deed is irrevocable. Consequence in case of the deliberately disloyal deed. Repentance no adequate remedy for guilt. Inability of the traitor to atone for his own treason. The rational doctrine of "endless penalty" not a morbid, or a

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cheerless, or an arbitrary doctrine. Decisiveness of character and rigidity of self-judgment. "I was my own destroyer and will be my own hereafter," is not an expression of weak brooding, but of rational self-estimate.

### LECTURE VI. — ATONEMENT

The idea of Atonement reviewed with reference to the "problem of the traitor." Typical and symbolic value of this problem. Conscience and personal freedom. The traitor's own self-estimate is decisive as to what can atone for his guilt, provided only that he is completely awakened to an insight into the irrevocable facts. Inadequacy both of the "penal-satisfaction" theories and of the so-called "moral" theories of Atonement. Need of an objective Atonement. Neither by arousing repentance nor by awakening thankfulness can Atonement be accomplished. Statement of an objective theory of Atonement through the deed of a suffering servant of the community. Human instances. Universality and verifiability of atoning deeds. In them the life of the community culminates.

### LECTURE VII. — THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF LIFE

Contrast between Buddhism and Christianity. Synthesis of the Christian ideas. Resulting esti-

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mate of human life and rule for the service and conduct of the Community. The Christian Will.

### LECTURE VIII. — THE MODERN MIND AND THE CHRISTIAN IDEAS

Human conditions of the survival of Christianity as a faith "upon earth." The social prospects of the near and remote future. The power of the Christian Ideas. Relations of the foregoing study to traditional Christianity.

### PART II. — THE REAL WORLD AND THE CHRISTIAN IDEAS

#### LECTURE IX. — THE COMMUNITY AND THE TIME-PROCESS

The neglected article in Christian theology, and the problem of the metaphysics of the community. Social "pluralism," and "the compounding of consciousness." The doctrine of the community not mystical. The time-process as essential to the existence of the community. Communities of "hope" and of "memory."

#### LECTURE X. — THE BODY AND THE MEMBERS

The Pauline use of the resurrection as a means of clarifying the consciousness of the community. Modern analogies; communities of coöperation;

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conditions upon which loyalty depends. The community as an interpretation.

### LECTURE XI. — PERCEPTION, CONCEPTION, AND INTERPRETATION

The theory of knowledge has been dominated in the past by the contrast between Perception and Conception. Need of the recognition of a third cognitive process. Charles Peirce's doctrine of Interpretation as a third and a triadic cognitive process, essentially social in its type. Criticism of Bergson's view of the ideal of knowledge. Interpretation, and the Metaphysics of the time-process.

### LECTURE XII. — THE WILL TO INTERPRET

Interpretation in its relation to Charles Peirce's triadic type of "Comparison." Comparison and interpretation under individual and social conditions. Definition of a "Community of Interpretation." Ideal value of such a community. Its form as the principal form which the "life of the spirit" assumes. Examples, and generalization of the ideals involved.

### LECTURE XIII. — THE WORLD OF INTERPRETATION

Outline of a form of idealism determined by the use of Peirce's definition of the cognitive process

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of interpretation. Relation to Bergson and to Plato. The world as a "Community of Interpretation." The One and the Many in such a world. The relation of interpretation to Time. Thesis: "The universe contains its own interpreter." The world of interpretation as not "static." Resulting general doctrine as to the nature and the unity of the "Spirit of the Community."

### LECTURE XIV. — THE DOCTRINE OF SIGNS

Definition of Peirce's term "Sign." The Signs as a third and triadic category, corresponding to the cognitive process of interpretation. The Doctrine of Signs in its relation to "Radical Empiricism," and to Pragmatism. The primacy of the social consciousness. Loyalty as the loving aspect of the "will to interpret." The metaphysics of the saving process. The irrevocable and the temporal.

### LECTURE XV. — THE HISTORICAL AND THE ESSENTIAL

The relation of this form of idealism to traditional Christianity. Pauline Christianity and our doctrine of interpretation. Final statement of our "Problem of Christianity."

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### LECTURE XVI. — SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Teleology and Induction. The larger teleological aspects of the natural world. The Church and the sects; the Church and the world; the future possibilities for religious development. Practical results of the inquiry.

# I

## THE PROBLEM AND THE METHOD





## LECTURE I

### THE PROBLEM AND THE METHOD

I PROPOSE, in the course of these lectures, to expound and to defend certain theses regarding the vital and essential characteristics of the Christian religion. In the present lecture, which must be wholly confined to the work of preparing the way for the later discussion, I shall first briefly explain my title, and shall state what I mean by "The Problem of Christianity." Then I shall name certain aspects of this problem which will determine the whole course of our inquiry; and I shall indicate the nature of the method which I intend to follow. Since our topic is so wealthy and so complex, I must begin by means of very general and summary statements, and must leave to later lectures any effort to deal with the details of the matters that I shall try to treat.

Before all else, let me say one word as to the general spirit in which I venture into

this so familiar, yet so mysterious and momentous, department of the philosophy of religion.

## I

The present day is one marked by a new awakening of interest in religious experience, and in its bearing upon life. This interest finds expression both in general literature and in philosophical discussion. I myself have to approach all such topics with the interests and the habits, not only of a student of philosophy, but of one already committed to a certain type of philosophical opinions. This fact sets inevitable limits to the sort of contribution that I can make to the inquiry which my title names. Yet the novelty of the present situation of human thought, and the dramatic interest of certain crises through which opinion has recently been passing, give to even the least constructive of philosophical students numerous opportunities to experience, in the world of religious inquiry, what men were never permitted to experience before. The philosoph-

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ical thought of our day is affected by new motives; and the religious life of the world is deepened by the presence of efforts which are due to the novel and far-reaching social and moral problems of our time. All these varied influences react upon one another. The student of philosophy may well feel himself moved, by recent discussions, to formulate opinions which the novelty of the life of other men may haply color, even when the one who formulates them has no power, derived from his own inner resources, to invent.

At all events, any sincere seeker for truth may hope that, however remote from his own powers it may be either to speak with tongues or to prophesy, he may gain new edification from his brethren, and may, in his turn, help others to share in the gifts of the spirit, and to be renewed and informed by some power which is not ourselves, and which seems, in this happy moment, to be coming into a close touch with the deeper thought and the better aspiration of our time.

With such a "trembling hope," — with such a hope to gain some advantage from the philosophical as well as from the religious movement of our times, — I myself have for a good while endeavored to reconsider some of the ancient and modern problems of the philosophy of religion. These lectures will embody the results of a few of these efforts towards reconsideration. Since I know that so many other inquirers are engaged in analogous tasks, and since I feel sure that unity of opinion regarding the office and the meaning of religion can only be approached through a variety of efforts, I am sure that my own venture is no mere outcome of lonely presumption.

## II

The man who considers the interests of religion may choose any one of three attitudes toward Christianity. The first is the familiar attitude of the expounder and defender of some form of the Christian faith, — the position of the apologist and of the Christian teacher. Even this one mode of

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dealing with the tradition of Christianity is capable of an almost endless wealth of variations. The defender of the faith may adhere to this or to that branch of the Christian church. Or perhaps he may regard tradition from the point of view which is often called that of modern Liberal Christianity. Or — whatever his own creed may be — he may lay the principal stress upon some practical task, such as that of a pastor or of a missionary. In yet another spirit, he may emphasize technical theological questions. Finally, he may make the history of the church or of the religion his main interest. Through all such variations, as they appear in the words and the hearing of religious inquirers and teachers, there may run a tendency that unifies, and so characterizes them all, — the positive tendency, namely, to defend, to propagate, and, in one way or another, to render efficacious the Christian view of God, of the world, and of human destiny.

Secondly, however, the inquirer who deals with religious problems may take the position

of the opponent or of the critic of Christianity, or may simply regard Christianity with a relative, although deliberately thoughtful, indifference. Such an opponent, or such an external critical observer of the Christian world, may be a representative of some other faith, as certain of the recent Oriental critics of Christian doctrine have been; or, in other cases, he may emphasize some aspect of the supposed conflict between the spirit and the results of modern science, on the one hand, and the tradition or the faith of Christendom on the other. At a very recent time in the history of European discussion, such attitudes of critical hostility or of thoughtful indifference towards Christianity were prominent factors in discussion, and occupied a favored place in the public mind. Such was the case, for instance, in the last century, during the early phases of the controversies regarding evolution, especially in the years between 1860 and 1880. As a philosophical student I myself was trained under the influence of such a general trend of public



opinion. These attitudes of critical indifference or of philosophical hostility towards traditional faith, are still prominent in our world of religious discussion ; but side by side with them there have recently become prominent tendencies belonging to a third group, — tendencies which seem to me to be, in their treatment of Christianity, neither predominantly apologetic nor predominantly hostile, nor yet at all indifferent. This third group of tendencies has suggested to me the title of these lectures. I wish briefly to characterize this group of ways of dealing with Christianity, and to indicate its contrast with the other groups.

### III

The modern student of the problems of religion in general, or of Christianity in particular, may see good reason for agreeing with the apologists, — with the defenders of the faith, — in attributing to Christianity, viewed simply as a product of human evolution, a central importance in history, in the religious

experience of our race, and in the endlessly renewed, yet very ancient, endeavor of mankind to bring to pass, or to move towards, the salvation of man. To such a student it may have become clear:— first, that whatever the truth of religion may be, the office, the task, the need of religion are the most important of the needs, the tasks, the offices of humanity; and, secondly, that both by reason of its past history and by reason of its present and persistent relation to the religious experience and to the needs of men, Christianity stands before us as the most effective expression of religious longing which the human race, travailing in pain until now, has, in its corporate capacity, as yet, been able to bring before its imagination as a vision, or has endeavored to translate, by the labor of love, into the terms of its own real life.

In view of these opinions, such a student of religion may tend to disagree with that spirit of critical indifference or of hostility towards Christianity which has characterized, and still characterizes, one of the two groups



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of religious inquirers whom I have just mentioned. With the apologists, then, and against the hostile or the thoughtfully indifferent critics of Christianity, such a student may stand, as one to whom the philosophy of religion, if there is to be a philosophy of religion at all, must include in its task the office of a positive and of a deeply sympathetic interpretation of the spirit of Christianity, and must be just to the fact that the Christian religion is, thus far at least, man's most impressive vision of salvation, and his principal glimpse of the home-land of the spirit.

Yet such a student may still see, for reasons which I need not at the outset of our quest fully state, how numerous are the questions yet to be answered, the reasonable doubts yet to be removed, the philosophical issues yet to be met, the historical problems yet to be solved, the tragedies of practical and of religious life yet to be overcome, the divisions of human faith yet to be reunited, before it can become quite clear to us, if it ever is to become clear, just what ones amongst

the apologists are indeed defending the true Christian faith, and wherein the truth of that faith, if it be true, consists, and what the essence of Christianity is, and in what form, if in any form, Christianity is destined to win over to itself, if it is ever to win, that troubled human world which it has illumined, but whereto it has thus far brought, not peace, but a sword.

For such a student, who is neither predominantly an apologist, nor, in the main, any hostile or indifferent critic, the topic to be chiefly considered in his own reflections concerning the Christian religion would be explicitly "The Problem of Christianity."

That is, such a student would approach this religion regarding it, at least provisionally, not as the one true faith to be taught, and not as an outworn tradition to be treated with an enlightened indifference, but as a central, as an intensely interesting, life-problem of humanity, to be appreciated, to be interpreted, to be thoughtfully reviewed, with the seriousness and with the striving for rea-

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sonableness and for thoroughness which we owe to every life-problem wherewith human destiny is inseparably interwoven.

Such is the mode of approach to the study of Christianity which these lectures will adopt. This mode of approach is in no wise new, but it is the one which, at the present moment, in my opinion, the thoughtful public of our day both most desires and most deeply needs. And despite all that has been already done, and well done, in the direction of the sympathetic philosophical interpretation of Christianity, there is still ample work yet to do to make this third mode of approach to our topic more effective for the clarifying of men's insight and for the strengthening of the great common religious interests.

### IV

If you ask in what way our problem of Christianity can be, at this stage, provisionally formulated, I may give you, in reply, a first glimpse both of the topics that we are to discuss, and of the general method to be

used in their discussion, by employing for the moment a deliberately inadequate expression.

What I am minded to consider in these lectures includes some part of an answer to the question: "In what sense, if in any, can the modern man consistently be, in creed, a Christian?" This form of statement indicates what is at issue, but calls in a most obvious way for a more exact definition of our plan. Yet the very vagueness of the outlook which these words suggest will help us to advance almost at once to a more definite view of our task.

"In what sense can the modern man consistently be, in creed, a Christian?" You see, in any case, that we are to speak of some sort of creed, and of the consistency with which somebody may or may not hold that creed. In other words, our own "problem of Christianity," in these lectures, is to be one that, at least in part, has to do with the reasonable consistency of certain possible religious opinions. That is, we are to study our topic as students of philosophy view their

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issues. Our problem is, in itself considered, and apart from the limitations of our own mode of inquiry, a life-problem, an intensely practical, a passionately interesting, issue, the problem and the issue of a religion. But we are to approach this problem reflectively, and are to take account of interests that are not only those of religion, but also those of thought.

Herein lies one chosen limitation of our enterprise, in that we are not undertaking to contribute directly to religion itself, but only to an understanding of some of the problems which religious creeds suggest. In so far, then, vague as this first statement of our problem is, the word "creed," and the reference to the creed of the "modern man," serve to specify in some measure the range of our investigation. As a fact, I shall summarily study in these lectures certain aspects of the traditional creed of the Christian Church.

On the other hand, the term "modern man," as just used in my provisional state-

ment of our problem, has a meaning whose deeper relation to our task we shall hardly be able to appreciate justly until the very close of this series of studies. "Can the modern man consistently hold a Christian creed?" But who, you will ask, is this modern man?

Superficially regarded, the conception of the "modern man" is one of the most arbitrary of the convenient fictions of current discussion. What views or types of views are, or ought to be, characteristic of the "modern man" hardly any of us will wholly agree in defining. And if there is any typical "modern man," he would seem, at first sight, to be a creature of a day. To-morrow some other sort of modern man must take his place. And of the modern man of a future century we now cannot even know the race, — much less, it would seem, the religious creed. What creed about religion, Christian or non-Christian, now befits the creature of a day whom our own young century calls the modern man, — why need we inquire? So you might



comment upon the statement of our problem which I have just put into words.

Yet even at this stage of the discussion, if you consider for a moment the meaning that underlies the so frequent use of the phrase "modern man" in current discussion, and that inspires our familiar interest in the supposed views of the fictitious being called the "modern man," you will see that even this provisional mode of formulating the problem of Christianity may, after all, guide us to a study of matters which are not fictitious and which have a bearing on permanent religious concerns.

For by the "modern man" most of us mean a being whose views are supposed to be in some sense not only the historical result, but a significant summary, of what the ages have taught mankind. The term "modern man" condenses into a word the hypothesis, the postulate, that the human race has been subject to some more or less coherent process of education. The modern man is supposed to teach what this "education of the human

race” has taught to him. The ages have their lesson. The modern man knows something of this lesson.

Such, I say, is the hypothesis, or postulate, which makes the phrase “modern man” so attractive. This hypothesis, this postulate, may be true or false. But at all events its meaning is deep and is connected with a certain more or less definite view of human nature and of the course of time, — a view which has played its own part in the history of religion, and which, in particular, has well-known relations to Christian belief.

We all remember that the apostle Paul conceived human history as including a process of education. As “modern man” of his own time, the apostle conceived himself to have become able to read the lesson of this process. But such a postulate, whether true or false, whether asserted in Paul’s time or in our own, whether Christian in its formulation or not, includes a doctrine that will later occupy a large place in our inquiry, — the doctrine that the human race, taken as a



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whole, has some genuine and significant spiritual unity, so that its life is no mere flow and strife of opinions, but includes a growth in genuine insight.

Our customary speech about the modern man implies that, in the light of this common insight gradually attained by the whole race, our creeds should be tested and, if need be, revised. The "modern man," defined in terms of such an hypothesis, is conceived as the present minister of this treasury of wisdom which the ages have stored and which our progress is still increasing. But, from such a point of view, to ask whether the modern man can consistently be in creed a Christian, is the same as to ask how Christianity, considered as a body of religious beliefs, is related to the whole lesson of religious history, and how far this supposed education of the human race has been, and remains, in spirit, in meaning, in its true interpretation, a Christian education.

Only at the close of our entire discussion shall we be able to see the real scope of this

last question, and its deeper relations to the problem of Christianity. It is not at all my intent to assume at this stage that the postulate just stated is true, namely, the postulate that the human race has been subject to some genuine process of education, that the ages have taught man some more or less connected lesson, and that the modern man can read this lesson. This first provisional formulation of our problem of Christianity in terms of the relation of Christianity to the creed of the modern man, is intended to direct attention at once to two aspects of our undertaking.

First, Christianity, as I have already pointed out, is, historically speaking, one great result of the effort of mankind to find the way of salvation, and is apparently thus far the most impressive and, in this sense, the greatest result of this very effort. Our problem of Christianity involves some attempt to find out what this great religion most essentially is and means, what its most permanent and indispensable features are. Secondly,

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our problem of Christianity is the problem of estimating these most permanent and indispensable features of Christianity in the light of what we can learn of the lesson that the religious history of the race, viewed, if possible, as a connected whole, has taught men.

So then, to state our problem of Christianity as a problem about whether the modern man can consistently be, in creed, a Christian, is to use language that seems to refer to the issues of the passing moment, but that at once leads back from the problem of the moment to the problem of the ages, from the modern man to humanity viewed as a whole. More carefully restated, then, our problem of Christianity is this: When we consider what are the most essential features of Christianity, is the acceptance of a creed that embodies these features consistent with the lessons that, so far as we can yet learn, the growth of human wisdom and the course of the ages have taught man regarding religious truth?

Our problem of Christianity is intended to

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be, as now appears, a synthesis of certain philosophical and of certain historical problems. The Christian religion furnishes the topic. This religion is an outcome of a long history and it includes a doctrine about life and about the world. We are to estimate this doctrine, partly in the light of its history, partly in the light of a philosophical study of the meaning and lesson of this history.

### V

This first statement of our problem brings next to our minds what is, I suppose, the most familiar issue which any one has to meet who undertakes to define the word "Christianity" in a manner suited to the spirit of recent discussion. This issue requires here a brief preliminary statement.

Christianity has two principal and contrasting characteristics. It is, in the first place, according to its own most ancient and familiar tradition, the religion which was taught and was first lived out, by an individual person, — by a man who dwelt among men, who

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counselled a mode of living, who aroused and expressed a certain spirit, and who taught that in this spirit, and in this life, the way of salvation is to be found for all men. This first characteristic of Christianity suggests to all of us a view regarding our problem which has been very greatly emphasized in recent discussions of religion, and which consists in asserting that, however deep the problem of Christianity may be, it is, in its essence, an impressively simple problem.

Let us consider for a moment the grounds of this assertion. They are well known. As a religion of a person, appealing to persons regarding the goal and the path of their own lives, Christianity in so far appears as an art of living, as a counsel for the attainment of the ends of human existence. Whatever may be your opinions or your doubts about God and the world and the mysteries of our nature and our destiny, it would in so far seem plausible that, as a modern man, you could reasonably estimate both the Master and his reported solution of the practical

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problem of human living, and that you could thus decide whether or no you can be in creed a Christian, without considering any very recondite matter. Your decision, "I am in creed a Christian," if, as a modern man, you made such a decision, might mean, from this point of view, simply this: "I find that the example and the personal inspiration of Jesus are for me of supreme value; and my experience shows me that the Christian plan of life promises to me, and to those of like mind with me, the highest spiritual success."

When thus defined, Christianity would mean the teaching, the personal example, and the spirit of the Master. If one's personal experience taught one that this teaching, this example, and this spirit are, from one's own point of view, the solution for the problem of human life, one both could be, and would be, in this sense of the word, in creed a Christian. So at least the assertion just repeated teaches. And if this assertion is true, our problem is essentially a simple problem.

So far I have merely stated a well-known



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opinion. But whoever thus attempts to simplify the problem of Christianity, can do so only by either ignoring or else minimizing the significance of the second of the two characteristics of the Christian religion, whose existence I have just mentioned. Historically speaking, Christianity has never appeared simply as the religion taught by the Master. It has always been an interpretation of the Master and of his religion in the light of some doctrine concerning his mission, and also concerning God, man, and man's salvation, — a doctrine which, even in its simplest expressions, has always gone beyond what the Master himself is traditionally reported to have taught while he lived.

Whatever the reason why the Master and the interpretation of his person and of his teaching have come to be thus contrasted, it is necessary at once to call attention to the historical fact that such an interpretation of the Master, of his person, and of his mission, always has existed ever since there was any Christian religion at all.

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The question is here not one dependent upon our decision as to the trustworthiness or the authenticity of any one tradition. For Christian tradition, in all its forms, has always more or less clearly and extensively distinguished between its own account of the Master, of his sayings, of his deeds, of his personal character, and its own interpretation of his mission, of his dignity, and of the divine purpose that his life accomplished. The Master himself and the interpretation of his mission have thus been from the first contrasted. And they have been contrasted by the very tradition to which we owe the report of both of them. This fact stands in the way of all such attempts to simplify our problem as is the attempt which I have just outlined.

To mention one of the very earliest forms of this contrast between religion as taught by the Master and its later expression. Tradition tells us about sayings in which the Master set forth his teaching. It also tells us of his fortunes, — of his suffering and death. Now, however it was that his teach-



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ings were related to the causes that brought about his sufferings and death, any account of these his fortunes inevitably contains some indication of the reasons why, according to tradition, "it was needful that Christ should suffer." But these reasons, as tradition states them, have always included some account of the Master's office and of his mission, — an account which has gone beyond what, during his life, tradition views as having become explicit and manifest to his disciples. While the Master lived, these and these (so the reports run) were his teachings. In these and these deeds he manifested his person and spirit. But only after he had suffered and died, and — as was early reported — had risen again, did there become manifest, according to tradition, what, during his earthly life, could not become plain even to those who were nearest to him.

Thus, I repeat, tradition reports the matter, and thus it contrasts, from the very beginnings of Christian history, the Master to whom this teaching is attributed and the inter-

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pretation of his nature and mission, which, according to the same tradition, only his sufferings, his death, his reported resurrection, and the coming of his spirit into a new unity with his disciples, could begin to make manifest. Thus the Master and the interpretation early began to be distinguished. Thus they remain distinguished throughout Christian history.

And thus, for the fictitious being whom I called the "modern man" — for him also, in case he chooses to consider the problem of Christianity at all, it must sooner or later become manifest, I think, that he cannot decide whether or no he is in creed a Christian, without reflecting upon his attitude, both towards the Master and towards the interpretations which history has given to the mission of the Master. To ignore, or even to minimize, the importance of these interpretations, to suppose that Christianity can be viewed simply, or even mainly, as the religion taught during the founder's life by the Master himself, is, I think, to miss the

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meaning of history to a degree unworthy of the highly developed historical sense which should characterize the "modern man."

The "modern man" may have to decide, in the end, that he is, in creed, no Christian at all, simply because he may have to reject some or all of the interpretations which tradition has asserted to be true of the mission and of the divine relations of the Master. But the modern man will be unable, in my opinion, to be just to his own historical sense and to the genuine history of Christianity, unless he sees that the Christian religion always has been and, historically speaking, must be, not simply a religion taught by any man to any company of disciples, but always also a religion whose sense has consisted, at least in part, in the interpretation which later generations gave to the mission and the nature of the founder. The interpretation may involve a false doctrine of life. If so, and if the modern man thinks so, the modern man cannot consistently be and remain a Christian. But I do not believe

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that the modern man, when he considers the lesson of the history of Christianity, can long remain content with the view that Christianity is, in its principally effective features, historically reducible to the simple statement of what, according to tradition, the Master taught to those who, while he was alive, heard his words.

### VI

Historically speaking, Christianity has, then, these two sharply contrasted aspects. I have said that the issue presented by this contrast is the most familiar one which, at the moment, any one who approaches the problem of Christianity has to meet. You may still ask: But what is this issue? I answer: It is the issue presented by the question: Of these two contrasting aspects of Christianity, which is, not only historically inevitable, but also the deeper, the more essential, the more permanently important aspect?

Now to such a question the history of

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Christianity, necessary as it is in preparing the way for a decision, cannot alone furnish the final answer. And at this point we are already able to give a reason for asserting that not only history, but the intrinsic nature of the interests which are involved, will require us, in our later lectures, to lay our main stress upon that aspect of Christianity which, in the order of time, came into existence later than the Master's own reported teaching. Let me state this reason at once, dogmatically and quite inadequately, but enough to indicate the course that we are to pursue.

The religion of the Master, as he is said to have taught it, involves many counsels, addressed to the individual man, regarding the art of life and regarding the way of entering what the Master called the Kingdom of Heaven. But these counsels, this preaching of the Kingdom of Heaven, — they appeared, in tradition, as stated in brief outlines and often as expressed in parables. It appears that, at least for the multitudes who listened,

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often for the disciples themselves, the parables needed interpretation, and that the sayings must be understood in the light of an insight which, at the time when these words were first uttered, was seldom or never in the possession even of those who were nearest to the Master.

This further insight, according to the same tradition, was something that, as was held, would come whenever the Master's spirit was still more fully revealed to his disciples. Often when they heard their Teacher speaking most plainly, the disciples, as we are told, did not yet quite understand what he meant. And now, as a fact, the reported sayings and parables of the founder possess, side by side with their so well-known directness and simplicity, certain equally well known but highly problematic traits which, in all the ages that have since elapsed, have led to repeated questions as to what the Master meant by some of the most central doctrines that he taught. For instance, precisely what he taught about the office and work of love,



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and about self-sacrifice, and about casting off all care for the morrow — such things have often seemed mysterious.

And precisely these more problematic features of the original teachings of the Master are the ones to which the later Christian community gave interpretations that it believed to be due to the guidance of the Master's spirit, and that it therefore inevitably connected with its doctrine regarding his own person and his mission. Since these later interpretations have to do with matters that the original sayings and parables, so far as reported, leave more or less problematic, so as to challenge further inquiry; and since all these more problematic matters are indeed of central importance for the whole estimate of the Christian doctrine of life, we may indeed have to recognize that the primitive Christianity of the sayings of the Master was both enriched and deepened by the interpretation which the Christian community gave to his person, to his work, and to his whole religion. I believe this to be the case.

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Our later discussion will set forth some of the further reasons for this opinion. These lectures will not be concerned with the history of dogma; and all our discussions concerning the truth of Christianity will be guided by an interest rather in the essentials of religion than in any of the refinements of theology. But it will be one of my theses that the essential ideas of Christianity include doctrines which indeed supplement, but which at the same time in spirit fulfil, the view of life and of salvation which the original teaching of the Master regarding the Kingdom of Heaven, as that teaching is reported by tradition, made known to those who heard him.

It will help our enterprise if, at this point, I simply state what, in my opinion, are the Christian ideas which both the history of Christianity, and the intrinsic importance of the religious concerns involved, will make it most needful for us to consider, for the sake of a fair comprehension of the problem of Christianity. These central Christian ideas, as I shall here name them and shall later



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discuss them, are three. They are all of them ideas that came to the mind of the Christian world in the course of later efforts to explain the true meaning of the original teaching regarding the Kingdom of Heaven. The Christian community regarded them as due to the guidance of the founder's spirit; but was also aware that, when they first came to light, they involved new features, which the reported sayings and parables of the Master had not yet made so explicit as they afterwards became. The Spirit which, as the early church came to believe, was in due time to guide the faithful to all truth, was held to be the interpreter who revealed these new things. Our own main interest is here not in the theological aspect of the development which led to these ideas. What concerns us is that these ideas actually appeared in the Christian community as an interpretation of what the founder had meant, while, as we shall later more clearly see, they came to constitute vital and essential portions of the religious message which Christianity had for mankind.

## VII

We may be aided in our selection of these three central ideas by mentioning the fact that certain features of the founder's reported teaching of the Kingdom of Heaven have generally seemed, to later ages, to stand in need of an interpretation which the founder's recorded words did not wholly furnish. The three ideas here in question were first developed in the mind of the Christian community in the midst of the early efforts to reach this further interpretation of what the founder had meant by the words that were attributed to him by tradition.

The Master's teachings are, for the most part, directed, in his reported sayings, to individual men, — either to some one individual viewed as a typical man ("Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself"), or to companies of individuals viewed as of such nature that the same counsel applies equally to any or to all of these individuals alike ("Blessed

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are the meek ;” “Be ye perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect”). Meanwhile, the Master freely speaks of what he calls the Kingdom of Heaven. And the Kingdom of Heaven appears, on its very face, to be some sort of social order, some sort of collective life, some kind of community. Yet the reported sayings do not, when taken by themselves, make perfectly explicit what that social order, what that community, is to which the name Kingdom of Heaven is intended to apply. Tradition represents the earliest interpretation of the term by the Disciples of Christ themselves, while he was yet speaking to them, as, in their own minds, more or less doubtful. Was the Master’s kingdom to be of this world, or of some other? Was it to be a more or less visible political social order? Was it to be wholly a matter of the inner spiritual lives of many outwardly separate individuals (“The Kingdom of Heaven is within you”).

Plainly, whatever the doctrine of the Kingdom really meant, its first expression was such as to call for a further development, and for a

richer interpretation than any one of the parables of the Kingdom, as originally reported, gave to it. The doctrine of the Kingdom was at once simple, direct, personal, and deep, mysterious, prophetic of something yet to be disclosed. And herewith we at once remind ourselves how the Christian community, living, as it believed, in and through the spirit of the Master, was early led to develop the doctrine of the Kingdom into the doctrine of the Christian Church.

When, however, we consider, not the historical accidents and not the external show, but rather the deeper spirit of this doctrine about the Christian Church, we are led to look beyond, or beneath, all the special dogmas and forms in which the opinion and the practice of the historical Christian Church has found in various ages a manifold and often a very imperfect expression. And we are also led to state, as the inner and deeper sense of the whole process of the history of the Church, the first of the three ideas of Christianity, — which will hereafter guide our study.

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And we may here state this first Christian idea in our own words thus, namely, as the doctrine that "The salvation of the individual man is determined by some sort of membership in a certain spiritual community, — a religious community and, in its inmost nature, a divine community, in whose life the Christian virtues are to reach their highest expression and the spirit of the Master is to obtain its earthly fulfilment." In other words: There is a certain universal and divine spiritual community. Membership in that community is necessary to the salvation of man.

I propose, in our later lectures, to consider, not the history and not, in any detail, the dogmas of the Christian Church, but the meaning, the foundation, the truth of this first of our three Christian ideas, — the idea of the divinely significant spiritual community of the faithful, — the idea that such a community exists, and is needed, and is an indispensable means of salvation for the individual man, and is the fitting realm wherein alone the Kingdom of Heaven which the Master preached can



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find its expression, and wherein alone the Christian virtues can be effectively practised. We are to ask, What is the foundation of this idea? What does it mean? In essence, is it a true idea? In what sense does it retain its meaning and its value to-day, and for the modern man, and (in so far as we can foresee) in what way is it destined to guide the future? This inquiry will constitute an essential part of our study of the Problem of Christianity.

The mention of this first of the three Christian ideas leads me at once to the mention of two other ideas. These two stand in the closest correlation with this first idea and with each other, and share with the first a character to which, as we shall later see, the mystery, the elementally human significance, and the beauty of the problem of Christianity are all of them due. Both of these ideas grew up because, in the preaching of the Kingdom of Heaven, the Master appealed to the individual man, but left certain aspects of this appeal mysterious, so that the question, What

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is the nature and the worth of the individual man? was left a matter of serious heart searching.

The second of our three ideas seems at first sharply contrasted with the gentle and hopeful spirit of some of the Master's best-known and most-loved statements. We shall later see, however, the deeper connection of this second idea with what the Master taught about the individual man. It is the grave, yes, the tragic idea that can be stated, in the form of a doctrine, thus: "The individual human being is by nature subject to some overwhelming moral burden from which, if unaided, he cannot escape." This burden is at once a natural inheritance and a burden of personal guilt. Both because of what has technically been called original sin, and because of the sins that he himself has committed, the individual is doomed to a spiritual ruin from which only a divine intervention can save him. The individual, as Paul first stated the case, is, apart from divine grace, "dead in trespasses and sins." His salvation,

if it occurs at all, must involve a quickening, — a raising of the dead.

Thus tragic, thus strangely opposed in seeming to the more comforting and hopeful of the parables of the founder, thus also very sharply contrasted with some of our now most favorite modern doctrines concerning the moral dignity of human nature, and concerning the course of the natural evolution of man from lower to higher spiritual stages, — thus paradoxical is the second of the three Christian ideas that, in our latter discussion, we shall emphasize. The first of the three central ideas involves, as we just saw, the assertion that the way of salvation lies in the union of the individual with a certain universal spiritual community. The second of these ideas, the idea of the moral burden of the individual, includes the doctrine that of himself, and apart from the spiritual community which the divine plan provides for his relief, the individual is powerless to escape from his innate and acquired character, the character of a lost soul, or, in Paul's phrase, of a dead man, who is by in-



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heritance tainted, and is also by his own deeds involved in hopeless guilt. You may well ask: Can the modern man make anything of such an idea? This question, as we shall see, is a very significant part of our problem of Christianity.

The third leading idea of Christianity which we shall have to consider is the one that many modern minds regard as the strangest, as the most hopelessly problematic, of the three. It is also the one whose relation to the original teachings of the Master seems most problematic. It is the idea expressed by the assertion: The only escape for the individual, the only union with the divine spiritual community which he can obtain, is provided by the divine plan for the redemption of mankind. And this plan is one which includes an Atonement for the sins and for the guilt of mankind. This atonement, and this alone, makes possible the entrance of the individual into a saving union with the divine spiritual community, and reveals the full meaning of what the Master meant by the Kingdom of

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Heaven. Without atonement, no salvation. And the divine plan has in fact provided and accomplished the atoning work.

### VIII

The idea of the spiritual community in union with which man is to win salvation, the idea of the hopeless and guilty burden of the individual when unaided by divine grace, the idea of the atonement, — these are, for our purposes, the three central ideas of Christianity. Of these ideas the second, and still more the third, seems, at first sight, especially foreign to the modern mind, as most of us conceive that mind; and all three appear to be due to interpretations of the mind of the Master which came into existence only after his earthly period of teaching had ceased. The discussion of the meaning and the truth of each of these three ideas is to constitute our proposed contribution to the Problem of Christianity. The justification of our enterprise lies in the fact that, familiar as these three ideas are, they are still almost wholly

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misunderstood, both by the apologists who view them in the light of traditional dogmas, and by the critics who assail the letter of dogmas, but who fail to grasp the spirit.

We have in outline stated how we define this Problem of Christianity. We have enumerated three ideas which we are to regard as the essential ideas of Christianity. We have indicated the method that we are to follow in discussing these ideas and in grasping and in attempting to clarify our problem. Our method is to consist in an union of an effort to read the lesson of history with an effort to estimate, upon a reasonable basis, the philosophy of the Christian religion. Already, even in our opening statement, we have endeavored to illustrate this union of historical summary with philosophical reflection.



## II

### THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSAL COMMUNITY



## LECTURE II

### THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSAL COMMUNITY

**I**N accordance with the plan set forth at the close of our first lecture, we begin our study of the Problem of Christianity by a discussion of the Christian idea of the Church, and of its universal mission.

#### I

The Kingdom of Heaven, as characterized in the Sermon on the Mount and in the parables, is something that promises to the individual man salvation, and that also possesses, in some sense which the Master left for the future to make clearer, a social meaning. To the individual the doctrine says, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." But when in the end the Kingdom shall come, the will of God, as we learn, is to be done on earth as it is in heaven. And therewith the kingdoms of this world — the social order as it now is and as it naturally is — will pass away. Then

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there will come to pass the union of the blessed with their Father, and also, as appears, with one another, in the heavenly realm which the Father has prepared for them.

This final union of all who love is not described at length in the recorded words of the Master. A religious imagery familiar to those who heard the parables that deal with the end of the world was freely used; and this imagery gives us to understand that the consummation of all things will unite in a heavenly community those who are saved. But the organization, the administration, the ranks and dignities, of the Kingdom of Heaven the Master does not describe.

When the Christian Church began, in the Apostolic Age, to take visible form, the idea of the mission of the Church expressed the meaning which the Christian community came to attach to the social implications of the founder's doctrine. What was merely hinted in the parables now became explicit. The Kingdom of Heaven was to be realized in and through and for the Church,—in the



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fellowship of the faithful who constituted the Church as it was on earth; through the divine Spirit that was believed to guide the life of the Church; and for the future experience of the Church, whenever the end should come, and whenever the purpose of God should finally be manifested and accomplished.

Such, in brief, was the teaching of the early Christian community. Unquestionably this teaching added something new to the original doctrine of the Kingdom. But this addition, as we shall later see, was more characteristic of the new religion than was any portion of the sayings that tradition attributed to the Master, and was as inseparable from the essence of primitive Christianity as the belief of the disciples themselves was inseparable from their very earliest interpretations of the person and the mission of their leader.

It is useless, I think, for the most eager defender and expounder of primitive Christianity in its purity to ignore the fact that, whatever else the Christian religion involves,

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some sort of faith or doctrine regarding the office and the meaning of the Church was an essential part of the earliest Christianity that existed after the founder had passed from earth.

Since our problem of Christianity involves the study of the most vital Christian ideas, how can we better begin our task than by asking what this idea of the Church really means, and what value and truth it possesses? Not only is such a beginning indeed advisable, but, at first sight, it seems especially adapted to enable us to use the manifold and abundant aids which, as we might suppose, the aspirations of all Christian ages would furnish for our guidance.

For, as you may naturally ask, is not the history of Christianity, viewed in at least one very significant way, simply the history of the Christian Church? Is not the idea of the Church, then, not only essential and potent, but one of the most familiar of the religious ideas of Christendom? Must not the consciousness of all really awakened Christian

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communities whose creeds are recorded stand ready to help the inquirer who wants to interpret this idea? May we not then begin this part of our enterprise with high hope, sure that, as we attempt to grasp and to estimate this first of our three essential Christian ideas, we shall have the ages of Christian development as our helpers? So, I repeat, you may very naturally ask. But the answer to this question is not such as quite fulfils the hope just suggested.

### II

As a fact, the idea and the doctrine of the Christian Church constitute indeed a vital and permanent part of Christianity; and a study of this idea is a necessary, and may properly be the first, part of our inquiry into the Problem of Christianity.

But we must not begin this inquiry without a due sense of its difficulty. We must remember at the very outset the fact that all the Christian ages, up to the present one, unite, not to present to us any finished interpreta-

tion of the idea of the Church, but rather to prove that this idea is as fluent in its expression as it is universal in its aim; and is as baffling, by reason of the conflicts of its interpreters, as it is precious in the longings that constitute its very heart.

If this idea comforts the faithful, it is also a stern idea; for it demands of those who accept it the resolute will to face and to contend against the greatest of spiritual obstacles, namely, the combined waywardness of the religious caprices of all Christian mankind. For the true Church, as we shall see, is still a sort of ideal challenge to the faithful, rather than an already finished institution, — a call upon men for a heavenly quest, rather than a present possession of humanity. “Create me,” — this is the word that the Church, viewed as an idea, addresses to mankind.

Meanwhile the contrast between the letter and the spirit of a fundamental doctrine is nowhere more momentous and more tragic than in case of the doctrine of the nature and the office of the Christian Church. The

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spirit of this doctrine consists, as we have already seen, in the assertion that there is a certain divinely ordained and divinely significant spiritual community, to which all must belong who are to attain the true goal of life; that is, all who, to use the distinctly religious phraseology, are to be saved.

How profoundly reasonable are the considerations upon which this doctrine is based we have yet to see, and can only estimate in the light of a due study of all the essential Christian ideas. To my own mind these considerations are such as can be interpreted and defended without our needing, for the purposes of such interpretation and defence, any acceptance of traditional dogmas. For these considerations are based upon human nature. They have to do with interests which all reasonable men, whether Christian or non-Christian, more or less clearly recognize, in proportion as men advance to the higher stages of the art of life.

The spirit, then, of the doctrine of the Church is as reasonable as it is universal. It

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is Christian by virtue of features which, when once understood, also render it simply and impressively human. This, I say, is what our entire study of the three Christian ideas will, in the end, if I am right, bring to our attention.

### III

But the letter of the doctrine of the Church has been subject to fortunes such as, in various ways and degrees, attend the visible embodiment of all the great ideals of humanity ; only that, as I have just said, the resulting tragedy is, in no other case in which spirit and letter are in conflict, greater than in this case.

In general the risks of temporary disaster which great ideals run appear to be directly proportioned to the value of the ideals. The disasters may be destined to give place to victory ; but great truths bear long sorrows. What humanity most needs, it most persistently misunderstands. The spirit of a great ideal may be immortal ; its ultimate victory, as we may venture to maintain, may be pre-



determined by the very nature of things; but that fact does not save such an ideal from the fires of the purgatory of time. Its very preciousness often seems to insure its repeated, its long-enduring, effacement. The comfort that it would bring if it were fully understood and accepted may make all the greater the sorrow of a world that still waits for the light.

In case of the history of the essential idea of the Church, the complications of dogma, the strifes of the sects, the horrors of the religious wars in former centuries, the confusions of controversy in our own day, must not make us despair. Such is the warfare of ideals. Such is this present world.

Least of all may we attempt, as many do, to accuse this or that special tendency or power in the actual Church, past or present, of being mainly responsible for this failure to appreciate the ideal Church. The defect lies deeper than students of such problems usually suppose. Human nature, — not any one party, — yes, the very nature of the pro-



cesses of growth themselves, and not any particular form of religious or of moral error, must be viewed as the source of the principal tragedies of the history of all the Christian ideals.

In fact, the true idea of the Church has not been forsaken; it is, in a very real sense, still to be found, or rather, to be created. We have to do, in this case, not so much with apostasy as with evolution. To be sure, at the very outset, the ideal of the Church was seen afar off through a glass, darkly. The well-known apocalyptic vision revealed the true Church as the New Jerusalem that was yet to come down from heaven. The expression of the idea was left, by the early Church, as a task for the ages. The spirit of that idea was felt rather than ever adequately formulated, and the vision still remains one of the principal grounds and sources of the hope of humanity.

## IV

Such doctrines, and such conflicts of spirit and letter, cannot be understood unless our historical sense is well awakened. On the other hand, they cannot be understood *merely* through a study of history. The values of ideals must be ideally discerned. If viewed without a careful and critical reflection, the history of such processes as the development of the idea of the Church presents a chaos of contending motives and factions. Apart from some understanding of history, all critical reflection upon this idea remains an unfruitful exercise in dialectics. We must therefore first divide our task, and then reunite the results, hoping thereby to win a connected view of the ideal that constitutes our present problem.

Let us, then, first point out certain motives which, when considered quite apart from any specifically Christian ideas or doctrines, may serve to make intelligible the ideal which is here in question. Then let us sketch the way

in which the idea of the Christian Church first received expression.

This first expression of the idea of the Church, as we shall find, transformed the very teaching which it most eloquently reënforced and explained, namely, the teaching which the parables of the founder had left for the faith of the Christian community to interpret. This was the teaching about the office and the saving power of Christian love. For such, as we shall see, was the first result of the appearance of the idea of the Church in Christian history.

By sketching, then, some non-Christian developments and then a stage of early Christian life, we shall get two aspects of the ideal of the universal community before us. Hereby we shall not have reached any solution of our problem of Christianity; but we shall have brought together in our minds certain Christian and certain non-Christian ideas whose interrelations will hereafter prove to be of the utmost importance for our whole enterprise.

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Next in order, then, comes a brief review of some of those motives which, apart from Christian history and Christian doctrine, make the ideal of the universal community a rationally significant ideal. These motives, in their turn, are of two kinds. Some of them are motives derived from the natural history of mankind. Some of them are distinctively ethical motives. We must become acquainted, through a very general summary, with both of these sorts of motives. Both sorts have interacted. The nature of man as a social being suggests certain ethical ideals. These ideals, in their turn, have modified the natural history of society.

### V

As an essentially social being, man lives in communities, and depends upon his communities for all that makes his civilization articulate. His communities, as both Plato and Aristotle already observed, have a sort of organic life of their own, so that we can compare a highly developed community, such

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as a state, either to the soul of a man or to a living animal. A community is not a mere collection of individuals. It is a sort of live unit, that has organs, as the body of an individual has organs. A community grows or decays, is healthy or diseased, is young or aged, much as any individual member of the community possesses such characters. Each of the two, the community or the individual member, is as much a live creature as is the other. Not only does the community live, it has a mind of its own, — a mind whose psychology is not the same as the psychology of an individual human being. The social mind displays its psychological traits in its characteristic products, — in languages, in customs, in religions, — products which an individual human mind, or even a collection of such minds, when they are not somehow organized into a genuine community, cannot produce. Yet language, custom, religion are all of them genuinely mental products.

Communities, in their turn, tend, under certain conditions, to be organized into com-

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posite communities of still higher and higher grades. States are united in empires; languages coöperate in the production of universal literature; the corporate entities of many communities tend to organize that still very incomplete community which, if ever it comes into existence, will be the world-state, the community possessing the whole world's civilization.

So far, I have spoken only of the natural history of the social organization, and not of its value. But the history of thought shows how manifold are the ways in which, if once you grant that a community is or can be a living organic being, with a mind of its own, this doctrine about the natural facts can be used for ideal, for ethical, purposes. Few ideas have been, in fact, more fruitful than this one in their indirect consequences for ethical doctrines as well as for religion.

It is no wonder, then, that many object to every such interpretation of the nature of a community by declaring that, whatever our ethical ideals may demand, a community really has no mind of its own at all, and is no



living organism. All the foregoing statements about the mind of a community (as such objectors insist) are metaphorical. A community is a collection of individuals. And the comparison of a community to an animal, or to a soul, is at best a convenient fiction.

Other critics, not so much simply rejecting the foregoing doctrine as hesitating, remark that to call a community an organism, and to speak of its possession of a mind, is to use some form of philosophical mysticism. And such mysticism, they say, stands, in any case, in need of further interpretation.

To such objectors I shall here only reply that one can maintain all the foregoing views regarding the real organic life and regarding the genuine mind of a community, without committing one's self to any form of philosophical mysticism, and without depending upon mere metaphors. For instance, Wundt, in his great book entitled "Volkerpsychologie," treats organized communities as psychical entities. He does so deliberately, and states his reasons. But he does all this purely as



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a psychologist. Communities, as he insists, behave as if they were wholes, and exhibit psychological laws of their own. Following Wundt, I have already said that it is the community which produces languages, customs, religions. These are, all of them, intelligent mental products, which can be psychologically analyzed, which follow psychological laws, and which exhibit characteristic processes of mental evolution, — processes that belong solely to organized groups of men. So Wundt speaks unhesitatingly of the *Gesamtbewusstsein*, or *Gesamtwille*, of a community; and he finds this mental life of the community to be as much an object for the student of the natural history of mind, as is the consciousness of any being whose life a psychologist can examine. His grounds are not mystical, but empirical, — if you will, pragmatic. A community behaves like an entity with a mind of its own. Therefore it is a fair “working hypothesis” for the psychologist to declare that it is such an entity, and that a community has, or is, a mind.

## VI

So far, then, I have merely sketched what, in another context, will hereafter concern us much more at length. For in later lectures we shall have to study the metaphysical problems which we here first touch. A community can be viewed as a real unit. So we have seen, and so far only we have yet gone.

But we have now to indicate why this conception, whether metaphysically sound or not, is a conception that can be ethical in its purposes. And here again only the most elementary and fundamental aspects of our topic can be, in this wholly preparatory statement, mentioned. To all these problems we shall have later to return.

We have said that a community can behave like an unit; we have now to point out that an individual member of a community can find numerous very human motives for behaving towards his community as if it not only were an unit, but a very precious and worthy being. In particular he — the indi-

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vidual member — may love his community as if it were a person, may be devoted to it as if it were his friend or father, may serve it, may live and die for it, and may do all this, not because the philosophers tell him to do so, but because it is his own heart's desire to act thus.

Of such active attitudes of love and devotion towards a community, on the part of an individual member of that community, history and daily life present countless instances. One's family, one's circle of personal friends, one's home, one's village community, one's clan, or one's country may be the object of such an active disposition to love and to serve the community as an unit, to treat the community as if it were a sort of super-personal being, and as if it could, in its turn, possess the value of a person on some higher level. One who thus loves a community, regards its type of life, its form of being, as essentially more worthy than his own. He becomes devoted to its interests as to something that by its very nature is nobler than himself. In such a case he may find, in his devotion to

his community, his fulfilment and his moral destiny. In order to view a community in this way it is, I again insist, not necessary to be a mystic. It is only necessary to be a hearty friend, or a good citizen, or a home-loving being.

Countless faithful and dutifully disposed souls, belonging to most various civilizations, — people active rather than fanciful, and earnest rather than speculative, — have in fact viewed their various communities in this way. I know of no better name for such a spirit of active devotion to the community to which the devoted individual belongs, than the excellent old word “Loyalty,” — a word to whose deeper meaning some Japanese thinkers have of late years recalled our attention.

Loyalty, as I have elsewhere defined it, is the willing and thoroughgoing devotion of a self to a cause, when the cause is something which unites many selves in one, and which is therefore the interest of a community. For a loyal human being the interest of the community to which he belongs is superior to

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every merely individual interest of his own. He actively devotes himself to this cause.<sup>1</sup>

Loyalty exists in very manifold shapes, and belongs to no one time, or country, or people. Warlike tribes and nations, during the stages of their life which are intermediate between savagery and civilization, have often developed a high type of the loyal consciousness, and hence have defined their virtues in terms of loyalty. Such loyalty may last over into peaceful stages of social life; and the warlike life is not the exclusive originator of the loyal spirit. Loyalty often enters into a close alliance with religion, and from its very nature is disposed to religious interpretations. To the individual the loyal spirit appeals by fixing his attention upon a life incomparably vaster than his own individual life, — a life which, when his love for his community is once aroused, dominates and fascinates him by the relative steadiness, the strength and fixity and stately dignity, of its motives and demands.

<sup>1</sup> See Lecture I of the "Philosophy of Loyalty" (New York, 1908).

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The individual is naturally wayward and capricious. This waywardness is a constant source of entanglement and failure. But the community which he loves is rendered relatively constant in its will by its customs; yet these customs no longer seem, to the loyal individual, mere conventions or commands. For his social enthusiasm is awakened by the love of his kind; and he glories in his service, as the player in his team, or the soldier in his flag, or the martyr in his church. If his religion comes into touch with his loyalty, then his gods are the leaders of his community, and both the majesty and the harmony of the loyal life are thus increased. The loyal motives are thus not only moral, but also æsthetic. The community may be to the individual both beautiful and sublime.

Deep-seated, then, in human nature are the reasons that make loyalty appear to the individual as a solution for the problem of his personal life. Yet these motives tend to still higher and vaster conquests than we have here yet mentioned. Warlike tribes and nations



fight together; and in so far loyalty contends with loyalty. But on a more highly self-conscious level the loyal spirit tends to assume the form of chivalry. The really devoted and considerate warrior learns to admire the loyalty of his foe; yes, even to depend upon it for some of his own best inspiration. **K**nighthood prizes the knightly spirit. The loyalty of the clansmen breeds by contagion a more intense loyalty in other clans; but at the same time it breeds a love for just such loyalty. Kindred clans learn to respect and, ere long, to share one another's loyalty. The result is an ethical motive that renders the alliance and, on occasion, the union of various clans and nationalities not only a possibility, but a conscious ideal.

The loyal are, in ideal, essentially kin. If they grow really wise, they observe this fact. The spirit that loves the community learns to prize itself as a spirit that, in all who are dominated by it, is essentially one, despite the variety of special causes, of nationalities, or of customs. The logical development of the



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loyal spirit is therefore the rise of a consciousness of the ideal of an universal community of the loyal, — a community which, despite all warfare and jealousy, and despite all varieties of gods and of laws, is supreme in its value, however remote from the present life of civilization.

The tendency towards the formation of such an ideal of an universal community can be traced both in the purely secular forms of loyalty, and in the history of the relations between loyalty and religion in the most varied civilizations. In brief, loyalty is, from the first, a practical faith that communities, viewed as units, have a value which is superior to all the values and interests of detached individuals. And the sort of loyalty which reaches the level of true chivalry and which loves the honor and the loyalty of the stranger or even of the foe, tends, either in company with or apart from any further religious motive, to lead men towards a conception of the brotherhood of all the loyal, and towards an estimation of all the values of life in terms of

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their relation to the service of one ideally universal community. To this community in ideal all men belong; and to act as if one were a member of such a community is to win in the highest measure the goal of individual life. It is to win what religion calls salvation.

When thus abstractly stated, the ideal of an universal community may appear far away from the ordinary practical interests of the plain man. But the history of the spirit of loyalty shows that there is a strong tendency of loyalty towards such universal ideals. Some such conception of the ideal community of all mankind, actually resulting from reflection upon the spirit of loyalty, received an occasional and imperfect formulation in Roman Stoicism. In this more speculative shape the Stoic conception of the universal community was indeed not fitted to win over the Roman world as a whole to an active loyalty to the cause of mankind.

Yet the conception of universal loyalty, as devotion to the unity of an ideal community,

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a community whereof all loyal men should be members, has not been left merely to the Stoics, nor yet to any other philosophers to formulate. The conception of loyalty both springs from practical interests and tends of itself, apart from speculation, towards the enlargement of the ideal community of the loyal in the direction of identifying that community with all mankind. The history of the ideals and of the religion of Israel, from the Song of Deborah to the prophets, is a classic instance of the process here in question.

### VII

We have thus indicated some of the fundamentally human motives which the ideal of the universal community expresses. We have next to turn in a wholly different direction and to remind ourselves of the way in which this ideal found its place in the early history of the Christian Church.

I cannot better introduce this part of my discussion than by calling attention to a certain

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contrast between the reported teaching of the Master regarding the Kingdom of Heaven, and some of the best-known doctrines of the Apostle Paul. This contrast is as obvious and as familiar as it has been neglected by students of the philosophy of Christianity. Every word that I can say about it is old. Yet a survey of the whole matter is not common, and I believe that this contrast has never more demanded a clear restatement than it does to-day.

The particular contrast which I here have in mind is *not* the one which both the apologists and the critics of Pauline Christianity usually emphasize. It is a contrast which does not directly relate to Paul's doctrine of the person and mission of Christ; and nevertheless it is a contrast that bears upon the very core of the Gospel. For it is a contrast that has to do with the doctrine about the nature, the office, the saving power of Christian love itself. I say that just this contrast between Paul's doctrine and the teachings of Jesus, although perfectly familiar, has been neg-

lected by students of our problem. Let me briefly show what I have in mind.

The best-known and, for multitudes, the most directly moving of the words which tradition attributes to Jesus, describe the duty of man, the essence of religion, and the Kingdom of Heaven itself, in terms of the conception of Christian love. I have not here either the time or the power adequately to expound this the chief amongst the doctrines which tradition ascribes directly to Jesus. I must pass over what countless loving and fit teachers have made so familiar. Yet I must remind you of two features of Christ's doctrine of love which at this point especially concern our own enterprise.

First, it is needful for me to point out that, despite certain stubborn and widespread misunderstandings, the Christian doctrine of love, as that doctrine appears in the parables and in the Sermon on the Mount, involves and emphasizes a very positive and active and heroic attitude towards life, and is not, as some have supposed, a negative doctrine of

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passive self-surrender. And secondly, I must also bring to your attention the fact that the Master's teaching about love leaves unsolved certain practical problems, problems which this very heroism and this positive tendency of the doctrine make by contrast all the more striking.

These unsolved problems of the reported teaching of Jesus about love seem to have been deliberately brought before us by the Master, and as deliberately left unsolved. The way was thus opened for a further development of what the Master chose to teach. And such further development was presumably a part of what the founder more or less consciously foresaw and intended.

The grain of mustard seed — so his faith assured him — must grow. To that end it was planted. Now a part of the new growth, a contribution to the treatment of the problems which the original teaching about love left unsolved, was, in the sequel, due to Paul. This sequel, whether the Master foresaw it or not, is as important for the further office of



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Christianity as the original teaching was an indispensable beginning of the process. Jesus awaited in trust a further revelation of the Father's mind. Such a new light came in due season.

Two features, then, of the doctrine of love as taught by Jesus, — its impressively positive and active character, and the mystery of its unsolved problems, — these two we must next emphasize. Then we shall be ready to take note of a further matter which also concerns us, — namely, Paul's new contribution to the solution of the very problems concerning love which the parables and the sayings of Jesus had left unsolved. This new contribution, — Paul himself conceived not as his own personal invention. For he held that the new teaching was due to the spirit of his risen and ascended Lord. What concerns us is that Paul's additional thought was a critical influence in determining both the evolution and the permanent meaning of Christianity.



## VIII

The love which Jesus preached has often been misunderstood. Critics, as well as mistaken friends of the Master's teachings, have supposed Christian love to be more or less completely identical with self-abnegation, — with the amiably negative virtue of one who, as the misleading modern phrase expresses the matter, "has no thought of self." Another modern expression, also misleading, is used by some who identify Christian love with so-called "pure altruism." The ideal Christian, as such people interpret his virtue, "lives wholly for others." That is what is meant by the spirit which resists not evil, which turns the other cheek to the smiter, which forgives, and pities, and which abandons all worldly goods.

Now, against such misunderstandings, many of the wiser expounders of Christian doctrine, both in former times and in our own, have taken pains to show that love, as the Jesus of the sayings and of the parables

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conceived it, does *not* consist in mere self-abnegation, and is not identical with pure altruism, and is both heroic and positive. The feature of the Master's doctrine of love which renders this more positive and heroic interpretation of the sayings inevitable, is the familiar reason which is laid at the basis of his whole teaching. One is to love one's neighbor because God himself, as Father, divinely loves and prizes each individual man. Hence the individual man has an essentially infinite value, although he has this value only in and through his relation to God, and because of God's love for him. Therefore mere self-abnegation cannot be the central virtue. For the Jesus of the sayings not only rejoices in the divine love whereof every man is the object, but also invites every man to rejoice in the consciousness of this very love, and to delight also in all men, since they are God's beloved. The man whom this love of God is to transform into a perfect lover cannot henceforth merely forget or abandon the self. The parable of the servant who, although him-

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self forgiven by his Lord, will not forgive his fellow-servant, shows indeed how worthless self-assertion is when separated from a sense that all are equally dependent upon God's love. But the parable of the talents shows with equal clearness how stern the demands of the divine love are in requiring the individual to find a perfectly positive expression of the unique value which it is his office, and his alone, to return to his Lord with usury. Every man, this self included, has just such an unique value, and must be so viewed. Hence the sayings are full of calls to self-expression, and so to heroism. Love is divine; and therefore it includes an assertion of its own divinity; and therefore it can never be mere self-abnegation. Christian altruism never takes the form of saying, "I myself ought to be or become nothing; while only the others are to be served and saved." For the God who loves me demands not that I should be nothing, but that I should be his own. Love is never merely an amiable tolerance of whatever form human frailty and folly

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may take. To be sure, the lover, as Jesus depicts him, resists not evil, and turns his cheek to the smiter. Yes, but he does this with full confidence that God sees all and will vindicate his servant. The lover vividly anticipates the positive triumph of all the righteous; and so his love for even the least of the little ones is, in anticipation, an active and strenuous sharing in the final victory of God's will. His very non-resistance is therefore inspired by a divine contempt for the powers of evil. Why should one resist who always has on his side and in his favor the power that is irresistible, that loves him, and that will triumph even through his weakness?

Such a spirit renders pity much more than a mere absorption in attempting to relieve the misery of others. Sympathy for the sufferer, as the sayings of Jesus depict it, is but an especially pathetic illustration of one's serene confidence that the Father who cares for all triumphs over all evil, so that when we feel pity and act pitifully, we take part in this divine triumph. Hence pity is no mere ten-

derness. It is a sharing in the victory that overcomes the world.

Such, then, in brief, is the doctrine of Christian love as the sayings and the parables contain it, — a doctrine as positive and strenuous as it is humane, and as it is sure of the Father's good will and overruling power. So far I indeed merely remind you of what all the wiser expounders of Christian doctrine, whatever their theology or their disagreements, have, on the whole, and despite popular misunderstandings, agreed in recognizing. And hereupon you might well be disposed to ask: Is not this, in spirit and in essence, the deepest meaning, — yes, is it not really the whole of Christianity? What did Paul do, what could he do, when he spoke of love, but repeat this, the Master's doctrine?

## IX

In answer to this question, we must next note that, over against this clear and positive definition of the spiritual attitude that Jesus attributes to the Christian lover, there

stand certain problems which come to mind when we ask for more precise directions regarding what the lover is to do for the object of his love. Love is concerned not only with the lover's inner inspiration, but with the services that he is to perform for the beloved. Now, in the world in which the teaching of Jesus places the Christian lover, love has two objects, — God and one's neighbor. What is one to do in order to express one's love for each of these objects?

So far as concerns the lover's relation to God, the answer is clear, and is stated wholly in religious terms. Purity of heart in loving, perfect sincerity and complete devotion, the heroism of spirit just described, — these, with complete trust in God, with utter submission to the Father's will, — these are the services that the lover can render to God. In these there is no merit; for they are as nothing in comparison with one's debt to the Father. But they are required. And in so far the doctrine of love is made explicit and the rule of righteousness is definite.



But now let us return to the relation of love to the services that one is to offer to one's neighbor. What can the lover, — in so far as Jesus describes his task, — what can he do for his fellow-man?

To this question it is, indeed, possible to give one answer which clearly defines a duty to the neighbor; and this duty is emphasized throughout the teaching of Jesus. This duty is the requirement to use all fitting means, — example, precept, kindness, non-resistance, heroism, patience, courage, strenuousness, — all means that tend to make the neighbor himself one of the lovers. The first duty of love is to produce love, to nourish it, to extend the Kingdom of Heaven by teaching love to all men. And *this* service to one's neighbor is a clearly definable service. And so far the love of the neighbor involves no unsolved problems.

But in sharp contrast with this aspect of the doctrine of love stands another aspect, which is indeed problematic. In addition to the extension of the loving spirit through



example and precept, the lover of his neighbor has on his hands the whole problem of humane and benevolent practical activity, — the problem of the positively philanthropic life.

The doctrine of love, — so positive, so active, so resolute in its inmost spirit, — might naturally be expected to give in detail counsel regarding what to do for the personal needs of the lover's fellow-man. But, at this point, we indeed meet the more baffling side of the doctrine of love. Jesus has no system of rules to expound for guiding the single acts of the philanthropic life. Apart from insisting upon the loving spirit, apart from the one rule to extend the Kingdom of Heaven and to propagate this spirit of love among men, the Master leaves the practical decisions of the lover to be guided by loving instinct rather than by a conscious doctrine regarding what sort of special good one can do to one's neighbor.

Thus the original doctrine of love, as taught in the parables, involves no definite programme for social reform, and leaves us in the

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presence of countless unsolved practical issues. This is plainly a deliberate limitation to which the Master chose to subject his explanations about love.

Jesus tells us of many conditions that appear necessary to the practical living of the life of love for one's neighbor. But when we ask: Are these conditions not only necessary but sufficient? we are often left in doubt. Love relieves manifest suffering, when it can; love feeds the hungry, clothes the naked; — in brief, love seems, at first sight, simply to offer to the beloved neighbor whatever that neighbor himself most desires. It is easy to interpret the golden rule in this simple way. Yet we know, and the author of the parables well knows and often tells us, that the natural man desires many things that he ought not to desire and that love ought not to give him. Since the life is more than meat, it also follows that feeding the hungry and clothing the naked are not acts which really supply what man most needs. The natural man does not know his own true needs. Hence the golden rule

does not tell us in detail what to do for him, but simply expresses the spirit of love. What is sure about love is that it indeed unites the lover, in spirit, to God's will. What constitutes, in this present world, the pathos, the tragedy of love, is that, because our neighbor is so mysterious a being to our imperfect vision, we do not now know how to make him happy, to relieve his deepest distresses, to do him the highest good ; so that most loving acts, such as giving the cup of cold water, and helping the sufferer who has fallen by the way-side, seem, to our more thoughtful moods, to be mere symbols of what love would do if it could, — mere hints of the active life that love would lead if it were directly and fully guided by the Father's wisdom.

Modern philanthropy has learned to develop a technically clearer consciousness about this problem of effective benevolence, and has made familiar the distinction between loving one's neighbor, and finding out how to be practically useful in meeting the neighbor's needs. Hence, sometimes, the modern mind

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wonders how to apply the spirit of the parables to our special problems of benevolence, and questions whether, and in what sense, the original Gospel furnishes guidance for our own modern social consciousness.

The problems thus barely suggested are indeed in a sense answered, so far as the originally reported teaching of Jesus is concerned, but are answered by a consideration which awakens a new call for further interpretation. The parables and the Sermon on the Mount emphasize, in the present connection, two things: First, that it is indeed the business of every lover of his neighbor to help other men by rendering them also lovers; and secondly that, as to other matters, one who tries to help his neighbor must leave to God, to the all-loving Father, the care for the true and final good of the neighbor whom one loves. Since the judgment day is near, in the belief of Jesus and of his hearers, since the final victory of the Kingdom will ere long be miraculously manifested, the lover, so Jesus seems to hold, can wait. It is his task

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to use his talent as he can, to be ready for his Lord's appearance, and to be strenuous in the spirit of love. But the God who cares for the sparrows will care for the success of love.

It is simply not the lover's task to set this present world right; it is his only to act in the spirit that is the Father's spirit, and that, when revealed and triumphant, at the judgment day, will set all things right. In this way the heroism of the ideal of the Kingdom is perfectly compatible, in the parables, with an attitude of resignation with regard to the means whereby the ideal is to be accomplished. Serene faith as to the result, strenuousness as to the act, whatever it is, which the loving spirit just now prompts: this is the teaching of the parables.

I have said that the world of the parables contains two beings to whom Christian love is owed: God and the neighbor. Both, as you now see, are mysterious. The serene faith of the Master sets one mystery side by side with the other, bids the disciple lay aside all curious peering into what is not yet re-

vealed to the loving soul, and leaves to the near future, — to the coming end of the world, — the lifting of all veils and the reconciliation of all conflicts.

X

Such, then, are the problems of the doctrine of love which the Master brings to light, but does not answer. Our next question is: What does Paul contribute to this doctrine of love?

Paul indeed repeated many of his Master's words concerning love; and he everywhere is in full agreement with their spirit. And yet this agreement is accompanied by a perfectly inevitable further development of the doctrine of Christian love, — a development which is due to the fact that into the world of Paul's religious life and teaching there has entered, not only a new experience, but a new sort of being, — a real object whereof the Master had not made explicit mention.

God and the neighbor are beings whose general type religion and common sense had made familiar long before Jesus taught,



mysterious though God and one's neighbor were to the founder's hearers, and still remain to ourselves. Both of them are conceived by the religious consciousness of the parables as personal beings, and as individuals. God is the supreme ruler who, as Christ conceives him, is also an individual person, and who loves and wills. The neighbor is the concrete human being of daily life.

But the new, the third being, in Paul's religious world, seems to the Apostle himself novel in its type, and seems to him to possess a nature involving what he more than once calls a "mystery." To express, so far as he may, this "mystery," he uses characteristic metaphors, which have become classic.

This new being is a corporate entity, — the body of Christ, or the body of which the now divinely exalted Christ is the head. Of this body the exalted Christ is also, for Paul, the spirit and also, in some new sense, the lover. This corporate entity is the Christian community itself.

Perfectly familiar is the fact that the exist-



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ence and the idea of this community constitute a new beginning in the evolution of Christianity. But neglected, as I think and as I have just asserted, is the subtle and momentous transformation, the great development which this new motive brings to pass in the Pauline form of the doctrine of Christian love.

What most interests us here, and what is least generally understood, I think, by students of the problem of Christianity, is the fact that this new entity, this corporate sort of reality which Paul so emphasizes, this being which is not an individual man but a community, does not, as one might suppose, render the Apostle's doctrine of love more abstract, more remote from human life, less direct and less moving, than was the original doctrine of love in the parables. On the contrary, the new element makes the doctrine of love more concrete, and, as I must insist, really less mysterious. In speaking of this corporate entity, the Apostle uses metaphors, and knows that they are metaphors; but, despite what the Apostle calls the new

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“mystery,” these metaphors explain much that the parables left doubtful. These metaphors do not hide, as the Master, in using the form of the parable, occasionally intended for the time to hide from those who were not yet ready for the full revelation, truths which the future was to make clearer to the disciples. No, Paul’s metaphors regarding the community of the faithful in the Church bring the first readers of Paul’s epistles into direct contact with the problems of their own daily religious life.

The corporate entity — the Christian community — proves to be, for Paul’s religious consciousness, something more concrete than is the individual fellow-man. The question: Who is my neighbor? had been answered by the Master by means of the parable of the Good Samaritan. But that question itself had not been due merely to the hardness of heart of the lawyer who asked it. The problem of the neighbor actually involves mysteries which, as we have already seen and hereafter shall still further see, the parables

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deliberately leave, along with the conception of the Kingdom of Heaven itself, to be made clearer only when the new revelation, for which the parables are preparing the way, shall have been granted. Now Paul feels himself to be in possession of a very precious part of this further revelation. He has discovered, in his own experience as Apostle, a truth that he feels to be new. He believes this truth to be a revelation due to the spirit of his Lord.

In fact, the Apostle has discovered a special instance of one of the most significant of all moral and religious truths, the truth that a community, when unified by an active indwelling purpose, is an entity more concrete and, in fact, less mysterious than is any individual man, and that such a community can love and be loved as a husband and wife love; or as father or mother love.

Because the particular corporate entity whose cause Paul represents, namely, the Christian community, is in his own experience something new, whose origin he views as wholly miraculous, whose beginnings and

whose daily life are bound up with the influence which he believes to be due to the spirit of his risen and ascended Lord, Paul indeed regards the Church as a "mystery." But, as a fact, his whole doctrine regarding the community has a practical concreteness, a clear common sense about it, such that he is able to restate the doctrine of Christian love so as to be fully just to all its active heroism, while interpreting much which the parables left problematic.

## XI

What can I do for my neighbor's good? The parables had answered: "Love him, help him in his obvious and bitter needs, teach him the spirit of love, and leave the rest to God." Does Paul make light of this teaching? On the contrary, his hymn in honor of love, in the first epistle to the Corinthians, is one of Christianity's principal treasures. Nowhere is the real consequence of the teaching of Jesus regarding love more completely stated. But notice this differ-

ence: For Paul the neighbor has now become a being who is primarily the fellow-member of the Christian community.

The Christian community is itself something visible; miraculously guided by the Master's spirit. It is at once for the Apostle a fact of present experience and a divine creation. And therefore every word about love for the neighbor is in the Apostle's teaching at once perfectly direct and human in its effectiveness and is nevertheless dominated by the spirit of a new and, as Paul believes, a divinely inspired love for the community.

Both the neighbor and the lover of the neighbor to whom the Apostle appeals are, to his mind, members of the body of Christ; and all the value of each man as an individual is bound up with his membership in this body, and with his love for the community.

Jesus had taught that God loves the neighbor, — yes, even the least of these little ones. Paul says to the Ephesians: "Christ loved the church, and gave himself up for it, that he might sanctify it; . . . that he might present

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the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot: . . . but that it should be holy and without blemish." One sees: The object of the divine love, as Paul conceives it, has been at once transformed and fulfilled.

In God's love for the neighbor, the parables find the proof of the infinite worth of the individual. In Christ's love for the Church Paul finds the proof that both the community, and the individual member, are the objects of an infinite concern, which glorifies them both, and thereby unites them. The member finds his salvation only in union with the Church. He, the member, would be dead without the divine spirit and without the community. But the Christ whose community this is, has given life to the members, — the life of the Church, and of Christ himself. "You hath he quickened, which were dead in trespasses and sins."

In sum: Christian love, as Paul conceives it, takes on the form of Loyalty. This is Paul's simple but vast transformation of Christian love.



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Loyalty itself was, in the history of humanity, already, at that time, ancient. It had existed in all tribes and peoples that knew what it was for the individual so to love his community as to glory in living and dying for that community. To conceive virtue as faithfulness to one's community, was, in so far, no new thing. Loyalty, moreover, had long tended towards a disposition to enlarge both itself and its community. As the world had come together, it had gradually become possible for philosophers, such as the later Stoics, to conceive of all humanity as in ideal one community.

Although this was so far a too abstract conception to conquer the world of contending powers, the spirit of loyalty was also not without its religious relationships, and tended, as religion tended, to make the moral realm appear, not only a world of human communities, but a world of divinely ordained unity. Meanwhile, upon every stage, long before the Christian virtues were conceived, loyalty had inspired nations of warriors with the sternest



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of their ideals of heroism, and with their noblest visions of the destiny of the individual. And the prophets of Israel had indeed conceived the Israel of God's ultimate triumph as a community in and through which all men should know God and be blessed.

But in Paul's teaching, loyalty, quickened to new life, not merely by hope, but by the presence of a community in whose meetings the divine spirit seemed to be daily working fresh wonders, keeps indeed its natural relation to the militant virtues, is heroic and strenuous, and delights to use metaphors derived from the soldier's life. It appears also as the virtue of those who love order, and who prefer law to anarchy, and who respect worldly authority. And it derives its religious ideas from the prophets.

But it also becomes the fulfilment of what Jesus had taught in the parables concerning love. For the Apostle, this loyalty unites to all these stern and orderly and militant traits, and to all that the prophets had dreamed about Israel's triumph, the tenderness of a

brother's love for the individual brother. Consequently, in Paul's mind, love for the individual human being, and loyalty to the divine community of all the faithful; graciousness of sentiment, and orderliness of discipline; are so directly interwoven that each interprets and glorifies the other.

If the Corinthians unlovingly contend, brother with brother, concerning their gifts, Paul tells them about the body of Christ, and about the divine unity of its spirit in all the diversity of its members and of their powers. On the other hand, if it is loyalty to the Church which is to be interpreted and revived, Paul pictures the dignity of the spiritual community in terms of the direct beauty and sweetness and tenderness of the love of brother for brother, — that love which seeketh not her own.

The perfect union of this inspired passion for the community, with this tender fondness for individuals, is at once the secret of the Apostle's power as a missionary and the heart of his new doctrine. Of loyalty to the

spirit and to the body of Christ, he discourses in his most abstruse as well as in his most eloquent passages. But his letters close with the well-known winning and tender messages to and about individual members and about their intimate personal concerns.

As to the question: "What shall I do for my brother?" Paul has no occasion to answer that question *except* in terms of the brother's relations to the community. But just for that reason his counsels can be as concrete and definite as each individual case requires them to be. Because the community, as Paul conceives it,—the small community of a Pauline church,—keeps all its members in touch with one another; because its harmony is preserved through definite plans for setting aside the differences that arise amongst individuals; because, by reason of the social life of the whole, the physical needs, the perils, the work, the prosperity of the individual are all made obvious facts of the common experience of the church, and are all just as obviously and definitely related

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to the health of the whole body,—Paul's gospel of love has constant and concrete practical applications to the life of those whom he addresses. The ideal of the parables has become a visible life on earth. So live together that the Church may be worthy of Christ who loves it, so help the individual brother that he may be a fitting member of the Church. Such are now the counsels of love.

All this teaching of Paul was accompanied, of course, in the Apostle's own mind, by the unquestioning assurance that this community of the Christian faith, as he knew it and in his letters addressed its various representatives, was indeed a genuinely universal community. It was already, to his mind, what the prophets had predicted when they spoke of the redeemed Israel. By the grace of God, all men belonged to this community, or would soon belong to it, whom God was pleased to save at all.

For the end of the world was very soon to come, and would manifest its membership, its divine head, and its completed mission.

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According to Paul's expectation, there was to be no long striving towards an ideal that in time was remote. He dealt with the interests of all mankind. But his faith brought him into direct contact with the institution that represented this world-wide interest. What loyalty on its highest levels has repeatedly been privileged to imagine as the ideal brotherhood of all who are loyal, Paul found directly presented, in his religious experience, as his own knowledge of his Master's purpose, and of its imminent fulfilment.

This vision began to come to Paul when he was called to be an apostle; and later, when he was sent to the Gentiles, the ideal grew constantly nearer and clearer. The Church was, for Paul, the very presence of his Lord.

Such, then, was the first highly developed Christian conception of the universal community. That which the deepest and highest rational interests of humanity make most desirable for all men, and that which the prophets of Israel had predicted afar off, the religious experience of Paul brought before his

eyes as the daily work of the spirit in the Church. Was not Christ present whenever the faithful were assembled? Was not the spirit living in their midst? Was not the day of the Lord at hand? Would not they all soon be changed, when the last trumpet should sound?

Our sketch, thus far, of the spirit of the ideal of the universal community, solves none of our problems. But it helps to define them. This, the first of our three essential ideas of Christianity, is the idea of a spiritual life in which universal love for all individuals shall be completely blended, practically harmonized, with an absolute loyalty for a real and universal community. God, the neighbor, and the one church: These three are for Paul the objects of Christian love and the inspiration of the life of love.

Paul's expectations of the coming judgment were not realized. Those little apostolic churches, where the spirit daily manifested itself, gave place to the historical church of the later centuries, whose possession of the



spirit has often been a matter of dogma rather than of life, and whose unity has been so often lost to human view. The letter has hidden the spirit. The Lord has delayed his coming. The New Jerusalem, adorned as a bride for her husband, remains hidden behind the heavens. The vision has become the Problem of Christianity.

Our sketch has been meant merely to help us towards a further definition of this problem. To such a definition our later lectures must attempt still further to contribute. We have a hint of the sources of the first of our three essential ideas of Christianity. We have still to consider what is the truth of this idea. And in order to move towards an answer to this question, we shall be obliged, in our immediately subsequent lectures, to attempt a formulation of the two other essential ideas of Christianity named in our introductory statement.



### III

#### THE MORAL BURDEN OF THE INDIVIDUAL



## LECTURE III

### THE MORAL BURDEN OF THE INDIVIDUAL

“ALL things excellent,” says Spinoza, “are as difficult as they are rare;” and Spinoza’s word here repeats a lesson that nearly all of the world’s religious and moral teachers agree in emphasizing. Whether such a guide speaks simply of “excellence,” or uses the distinctively religious phraseology and tells us about the way to “salvation,” he is sure, if he is wise, to recognize, and on occasion to say, that whoever is to win the highest goal must first learn to bear a heavy burden. It also belongs to the common lore of the sages to teach that this burden is much more due to the defects of our human nature than to the hostility of fortune. “We ourselves make our time short for our task”: such comments are as trite as they are well founded in the facts of life.

## I

But among the essential ideas of Christianity, there is one which goes beyond this common doctrine of the serious-minded guides of humanity. For this idea defines the moral burden, to which the individual who seeks salvation is subject, in so grave a fashion that many lovers of mankind, and, in particular, many modern minds, have been led to declare that so much of Christian doctrine, at least in the forms in which it is usually stated, is an unreasonable and untrue feature of the faith. This idea I stated at the close of our first lecture, side by side with the two other ideas of Christianity which I propose, in these lectures, to discuss. The idea of the Church, — of the universal community, — which was our topic in the second lecture, is expressed by the assertion that there is a real and divinely significant spiritual community to which all must belong who are to win the true goal of life. The idea of the moral burden

of the individual is expressed by maintaining that (as I ventured to state this idea in my own words): "The individual human being is by nature subject to some overwhelming moral burden from which, if unaided, he cannot escape. Both because of what has technically been called original sin, and because of the sins that he himself has committed, the individual is doomed to a spiritual ruin from which only a divine intervention can save him."

This doctrine constitutes the second of the three Christian ideas that I propose to discuss. I must take it up in the present lecture.

## II

To this mode of continuing our discussion you may object that our second lecture left the idea of the Church very incompletely stated, and, in many most important respects, also left that idea uninterpreted, uncriticised, and not yet brought into any clear relation with the creed of the modern man. Is it

well, you may ask, to discuss a second one of the Christian ideas, when the first has not yet been sufficiently defined?

I answer that the three Christian ideas which we have chosen for our inquiry are so closely related that each throws light upon the others, and in turn receives light from them. Each of these ideas needs, in some convenient order, to be so stated and so illustrated, and then so made the topic of a thoughtful reflection, that we shall hereby learn: First, about the basis of this idea in human nature; secondly, about its value, — its ethical significance as an interpretation of life; and thirdly, about its truth, and about its relation to the real world. At the close of our survey of the three ideas, we shall bring them together, and thus form some general notion of what is essential to the Christian doctrine of life viewed as a whole. We shall at the same time be able to define the way in which this Christian doctrine of life expresses certain actual needs of men, and undertakes to meet these needs. We

shall then have grounds for estimating the ethical and religious value of the connected whole of the doctrines in question.

There will then remain the hardest part of our task: the study of the relation of these Christian ideas to the real world. So far as we are concerned, this last part of our investigation will involve, in the main, metaphysical problems; and the closing lectures of our course will therefore contain an outline of the metaphysics of Christianity, culminating in a return to the problems of the modern man.

Such is our task. On the way toward our goal we must be content, for a time, with fragmentary views. They will, ere long, come into a certain unity with one another; but for that unity we must wait, until each idea has had its own partial and preliminary presentation.

Of the idea of the universal community we have learned, thus far, two things, and no more. First, we have seen that this idea has a broad psychological basis in the



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social nature of mankind, while it gets its ethical value from its relations to the interests and needs of all those of any time or nation who have learned what is the deeper meaning of loyalty. By loyalty, as you remember, I mean the thoroughgoing, practical, and loving devotion of a self to an united community.

Secondly, we have seen that, in addition to its general basis in human nature, this idea has its specifically Christian form. The significance of this form we have illustrated by the way in which the original doctrine of Christian love, as Jesus taught it in his sayings and parables, received not only an application, but also a new development in the consciousness of the apostolic churches, when the Apostle Paul experienced and moulded their life.

The synthesis of the Master's doctrine of love with the type of loyalty which the life of the spirit in the Church taught Paul to express, makes concrete and practical certain more mysterious aspects of the doctrine of love which the Master had taught in parables,

but had left for a further revelation to define. And herewith the spirit of the Christian idea of the universal community entered, as a permanent possession, into the history of Christianity.

This preliminary study of the idea of the universal community leaves us with countless unsolved problems. But it at least shows us where some portion of our main problem lies. The dogmas of the historical Church concerning its own authority we have so far left, in our discussion, almost untouched. That the spirit and the letter of this first of our Christian ideas are still very far apart, all who love mankind, and who regard Christianity wisely, well know. We have not yet tried to show how spirit and letter are to be brought nearer together. It has not been my privilege to tell you where the true Church is to-day to be found. As a fact, I believe it still to be an invisible Church. And I readily admit that a disembodied idea does not meet all the interests of Christianity, and does not answer all the questions of the modern man.

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But we have yet, in due time, to consider whether, and to what extent, the universal community is a reality. That is a problem, partly of dogma, partly of metaphysics. It is not my office to supply the modern man, or any one else, with a satisfactory system of dogmas. But I believe that philosophy has still something to say which is worth saying regarding the sense in which there really is an universal community such as expresses what the Christian idea means. I shall hereafter offer my little contribution to this problem.

### III

Let us turn, then, to our new topic. The moralists, as we have already pointed out, are generally agreed that whoever is to win the highest things must indeed learn to bear a heavy moral burden. But the Christian idea now in question adds to the common lore of the moralists the sad word: "*The individual cannot bear this burden.* His tainted nature forbids; his guilt weighs him down.

If by salvation one means a winning of the true goal of life, the individual, unaided, cannot be saved. And the help that he needs for bearing his burden must come from some source entirely above his own level, — from a source which is, in some genuine sense, divine.”

The most familiar brief statement of the present idea is that of Paul in the passage in the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, which culminates in this cry: “O wretched man that I am!” What the Apostle, in the context of this passage, expounds as his interpretation both of his own religious experience and of human nature in general, has been much more fully stated in the form of well-known doctrines, and has formed the subject-matter for ages of Christian controversy.

In working out his own theory of the facts which he reports, Paul was led to certain often cited statements about the significance and the effect of Adam’s legendary transgression. And, as a consequence of these words and of

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a few other Pauline passages, technical problems regarding original sin, predestination, and related topics have come to occupy so large a place in the history of theology, that, to many minds, Paul's own report of personal experience, and his statements about plain facts of human nature, have been lost to sight (so far as concerns the idea of the moral burden of the individual) in a maze of controversial complications. To numerous modern minds the whole idea of the moral burden of the individual seems, therefore, to be an invention of theologians, and to possess little or no religious importance.

Yet I believe that such a view is profoundly mistaken. The idea of the moral burden of the individual is, as we shall see, not without its inherent complications, and not without its relation to very difficult problems, both ethical and metaphysical. Yet, of the three essential ideas of Christianity which constitute our list, it is, relatively speaking, the simplest, and the one which can be most easily interpreted to the enlightened common

sense of the modern man. Its most familiar difficulties are due rather to the accidents of controversy than to the nature of the subject.

The fate which has beset those who have dealt with the technical efforts to express this idea is partly explicable by the general history of religion; but is also partly due to varying personal factors, such as those which determined Paul's own training. This fate may be summed up by saying that, regarding just this matter of the moral burden of the individual, those who, by virtue of their genius or of their experience, have most known what they meant, have least succeeded in making clear to others what they know.

Paul, for instance, grasped the essential meaning of the moral burden of the individual with a perfectly straightforward veracity of understanding. What he saw, as to this matter, he saw with tragic clearness, and upon the basis of a type of experience that, in our own day, we can verify, as we shall soon see, much more widely than was possible for him. But when he put his doctrine into



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words, both his Rabbinical lore, and his habits of interpreting tradition, troubled his speech; and the passages which embody his theory of the sinfulness of man remain as difficult and as remote from his facts, as his report of these facts of life themselves is eloquent and true.

Similar has been the fortune of nearly all subsequent theology regarding the technical treatment of this topic. Yet growing human experience, through all the Christian ages, has kept the topic near to life; and to-day it is in closer touch with life than ever. The idea of the moral burden of the individual seems, to many cheerful minds, austere; but, if it is grave and stern, it is grave with the gravity of life, and stern only as the call of life, to any awakened mind, ought to be stern. If the traditional technicalities have obscured it, they have not been able to affect its deeper meaning or its practical significance. Rightly interpreted, it forms, I think, not only an essential feature of Christianity, but an indispensable part of every



religious and moral view of life which considers man's business justly, and does so with a reasonable regard for the larger connections of our obligations and of our powers.

#### IV

If we ourselves are to see these larger connections, we must, for the time, disregard the theological complications of the history of doctrine concerning original sin, and must also disregard the metaphysical problems that lie behind these complications. We must do this; but not as if these theological theories were wholly arbitrary, or wholly insignificant. We must simply begin with those facts of human nature which here most deeply concern us.

These facts have a metaphysical basis. In the end, we ourselves shall seek to come into touch with so much of theology as most has to do with our problem of Christianity. We cannot tell, until our preliminary survey is completed, and our metaphysical treatment of our problem is reached, what form our

sketch of a theology will assume. We must be patient with our fragmentary views until we see how to bring them together.

But, for the time being, our question relates not to the legend of Adam's fall, nor to something technically called original sin, but to man as we empirically know him. We ask: How far is the typical individual man weighed down, in his efforts to win the goal of life, by a burden such as Paul describes in his epistle to the Romans? And what is the significance of this burden?

Here, at once, we meet with the obvious fact, often mentioned, not only in ancient, but also in many modern, discussions of our topic, — with the fact that there are, deep-seated in human nature, many tendencies that our mature moral consciousness views as evil. These tendencies have a basis in qualities that are transmitted by heredity.

Viewed as an observant naturalist, — as a disinterested student of the life-process views them, all our inherited instincts are, in one sense, upon a level. For no instincts

are, at the outset of life, determined by any purpose, — either good or evil, — of which we are then conscious. But, when trained, through experience and action, our instincts become interwoven into complex habits, and thus are transformed into our voluntary activities. What at the beginning is an elemental predisposition to respond to a specific sensory stimulus in a more or less vigorous but incoherent and generalized way, becomes, in the context of the countless other predispositions upon which is based our later training, the source of a mode of conduct, — of conduct that, as we grow, tends to become more and more definite, and that may be valuable for good or for ill. And, as a fact, many of our instinctive predispositions actually appear, in the sequel, to be like noxious plants or animals. That is, to use a familiar phrase, they “turn out ill.” They are expressed in our maturer life in maladjustments, in vices, or perhaps in crimes.

Now Paul, like a good many other moralists, was impressed by the number and by the vigor

of those amongst our instinctive predispositions which, under the actual conditions of human training, "turn out ill," and are interwoven into habits that often lead the natural man into baseness and into a maze of evil deeds. Paul summarizes this aspect of the facts, as he saw them, in his familiar picture, first, of the Gentile world, and then of the moral state of the unregenerate who were Jews. This picture we find in the opening chapters of his epistle to the Romans.

The majority of readers appear to suppose that the essential basis of Paul's theory about the moral burden of the individual is to be found in these opening chapters, and in the assertion that the worst vices and crimes of mankind are the most accurate indications of how bad human nature is. For such readers, whether they agree with Paul or not, the whole problem reduces to the question: "Are men, and are human traits and tendencies, naturally as mischievous; are we all as much predisposed to vices and to crimes as Paul's dark picture of the world in which he lived bids

us believe that all human characters are? Is man, — viewed as a fair observer from another planet might view him, — is man by nature, or by heredity, predominantly like a noxious plant or animal? Unless some external power, such as the power that Paul conceives to be Divine Grace, miraculously saves him, is he bound to turn out ill, — to be the beast of prey, the victim of lust, the venomous creature, whom Paul portrays in these earlier chapters of his letters to the Romans?"

You well know that, as to the questions thus raised, there is much to be said, both for and against the predominantly mischievous character of the natural and instinctive predispositions of men; and both for and against the usual results of training, in case of the people who make up our social world. Paul's account of this aspect of the life of the natural man has both its apologists and its critics.

I must simply decline, however, to follow the usual controversies as to the natural predispositions of the human animal any further

in this place. I have mentioned the familiar topic in order to say at once that none of the considerations which the opening chapters of the epistle to the Romans suggest to a modern reader regarding the noxious or the useful instinctive predispositions of ordinary men, or even of extraordinarily defective or of exceptionally gifted human beings, seem to be of any great importance for the understanding of the genuine Pauline doctrine of the moral burden of the individual.

Paul opened the epistle to the Romans by considerations which merely prepared the way for his main thesis. His argument in the earlier chapters is also chiefly preparatory. But his main doctrine concerning our moral burden depends upon other considerations than a mere enumeration of the vices and crimes of a corrupt society. It depends, in fact, upon considerations which, as I believe, are almost wholly overlooked in most of the technical controversies concerning original sin, and concerning the evil case of the unregenerate man.



I shall venture to translate these more significant considerations which Paul emphasizes into a relatively modern phraseology. I believe that I shall do so in a way that is just to Paul's spirit, and that will enable us soon to return to the text of the seventh chapter of his epistle with a clearer understanding of the main issue.

## V

Whoever sets out to study, as psychologist, the moral side of human nature, with the intention of founding upon that study an estimate of the part which good and evil play in our life, must make clear to his mind a familiar, but important, and sometimes neglected distinction. This is the distinction between the conduct of men, upon the one hand, and the grade or sort of consciousness with which, upon the other hand, their conduct, whatever it is, is accompanied.

Conduct, as we have already mentioned, results from the training which our hereditary predispositions, our instinctive tenden-



cies, get, when the environment has played upon them in a suitable way, and for a sufficient time. The environment which trains us to our conduct may be animate or inanimate; although in our case it is very largely a human environment. It is not necessary that we should be clearly aware of what our conduct in a given instance is or means, just as it is not necessary that one who speaks a language fluently should be consciously acquainted with the grammar of that language, or that one who can actually find the way over a path in the mountains should be able to give directions to a stranger such as would enable the latter to find the same way.

In general, it requires one sort of training to establish in us a given form of conduct, and a decidedly different sort of training to make us aware of what that form of conduct is, and of what, for us ourselves, it means.

The training of all the countless higher and more complex grades and types of knowledge about our own conduct which we can find present in the world of our self-knowledge,

is subject to a general principle which I may as well state at once. Conduct, as I have just said, can be trained through the action of any sort of tolerable environment, animate or inanimate. But the higher and more complex types of our consciousness about our conduct, our knowledge about what we do, and about why we do it, — all this more complex sort of practical knowledge of ourselves, is trained by a specific sort of environment, namely, by a social environment.

And the social environment that most awakens our self-consciousness about our conduct does so by opposing us, by criticising us, or by otherwise standing in contrast with us. Our knowledge of our conduct, in all its higher grades, and our knowledge of ourselves as the authors or as the guides of our own conduct, our knowledge of how and why we do what we do, — all such more elaborate self-knowledge is, directly or indirectly, a social product, and a product of social contrasts and oppositions of one sort or another. Our fellows train us to all our higher grades

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of practical self-knowledge, and they do so by giving us certain sorts of social trouble.

If we were capable of training our conduct in solitude, we should not be nearly as conscious as we now are of the plans, of the ideals, of the meaning, of this conduct. A solitary animal, if well endowed with suitable instincts, and if trained through the sort of experimenting that any intelligent animal carries out as he tries to satisfy his wants, would gradually form some sort of conduct. This conduct might be highly skilful. But if this animal lived in a totally unsocial, in a wholly inanimate, environment, he would meet with no facts that could teach him to be aware of what his conduct was, in the sense and degree in which we are aware of our own conduct. *For he, as a solitary creature, would find no other instance of conduct with which to compare his own.* And all knowledge rests upon comparison. It is my knowledge of my fellows' doings, and of their behavior toward me, — it is this which gives me the basis for the sort of comparison that I use

whenever I succeed in more thoughtfully observing myself or estimating myself.

If you want to grasp this principle, consider any instance that you please wherein you are actually and clearly aware of how you behave and of why you behave thus. Consider, namely, any instance of a higher sort of skill in an art, in a game, in business, — an instance, namely, wherein you not only *are* skilful, but are fully observant of what your skill is, and of why you consciously prefer this way of playing or of working. You will find that always your knowledge and your estimate of your skill and of your own way of doing, turn upon comparing your own conduct with that of some real or ideal comrade, or fellow, or rival, or opponent, or critic; or upon knowing how your social order in general carries on or estimates this sort of conduct; or, finally, upon remembering or using the results of former social comparisons of the types mentioned.

I walk as I happen to walk, and in general, if let alone, I have no consciousness as to

what my manner of walking is; but let my fellow's gait or pace attract my attention, or let my fellow laugh at my gait, or let him otherwise show that he observes my gait; and forthwith, if my interest is stirred, I may have the ground for beginning to observe what my own gait is, and how it is to be estimated.

In brief, it is our fellows who first startle us out of our natural unconsciousness about our own conduct; and who then, by an endless series of processes of setting us attractive but difficult models, and of socially interfering with our own doings, train us to higher and higher grades and to more and more complex types of self-consciousness regarding what we do and why we do it. Play and conflict, rivalry and emulation, conscious imitation and conscious social contrasts between man and man, — these are the source of each man's consciousness about his own conduct.

Whatever occurs in our literal social life, and in company with our real fellows, can be,

and often is, repeated with endless variations in our memory and imagination, and in a companionship with ideal fellow-beings of all grades of significance. And thus our thoughts and memories of all human beings who have aroused our interest, as well as our thoughts about God, enrich our social environment by means of a wealth of real and ideal fellow-beings, with whom we can and do compare and contrast ourselves and our own conduct.

And since all this is true, this whole process of our knowledge about our own doings, and about our plans, and about our estimates of ourselves, is a process capable of simply endless variation, growth, and idealization. Hence the variations of our moral self-consciousness have all the wealth of the entire spiritual world. Comparing our doings with the standards that the social will furnishes to us, in the form of customs and of rules, we become aware both of what Paul calls, in a special instance, "the law," and of ourselves either as in harmony with or opposed to this



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law. The comparison and the contrast make us view ourselves on the one side, and the social will, — that is, “the law,” — on the other side, as so related that, the more we know of the social will, the more highly conscious of ourselves we become; while the better we know ourselves, the more clearly we estimate the dignity and the authority of the social will.

So much, then, for a mere hint of the general ways in which our moral self-consciousness is a product of our social life. This self is known to each one of us through its social contrasts with other selves, and with the will of the community. If these contrasts displease us, we try to relieve the tension. If they fascinate, we form our ideals accordingly. But in either case we become conscious of some plan or ideal of our own. Our developed conscience, psychologically speaking, is the product of endless efforts to clear up, to simplify, to reduce to some sort of unity and harmony, the equally endless contrasts between the self, the fellow-man, and the social



will in general, — contrasts which our social experience constantly reveals and renders fascinating or agonizing, according to the state of our sensitiveness or of our fortunes.

## VI

These hints of the nature of a process which you can illustrate by every higher form and gradation of the moral consciousness of men have now prepared us for one more observation which, when properly understood, will bring us directly in contact with Paul's own comments upon the moral burden of any human being who reaches a high spiritual level.

Our conduct may be, according to our instincts and our training, whatever it happens to be. Since man is an animal that is hard to train, it will often be, from the point of view of the social will of our community, more or less defective conduct. But it might also be fairly good conduct; and, in normal people of good training, it often is so. In this respect, then, it seems unpsychological to assert that the conduct of all natural

men is universally depraved, — however ill Paul thought of his Gentiles.

Let us turn, however, from men's conduct to their consciousness about their conduct; and then the simple and general principles just enunciated will give us a much graver view of our moral situation. Paul's main thesis about our moral burden relates not to our conduct, but to our consciousness about our conduct.

Our main result, so far, is that, from a purely psychological point of view, my consciousness about my conduct, and consequently my power to form ideals, and my power to develop any sort of conscience, are a product of my nature as a social being. And the product arises in this way: Contrasts, rivalries, difficult efforts to imitate some fascinating fellow-being, contests with my foes, emulation, social ambition, the desire to attract attention, the desire to find my place in my social order, my interest in what my fellows say and do, and especially in what they say and do with reference to

me, — such are the more elemental social motives and the social situations which at first make me highly conscious of my own doings.

Upon the chaos of these social contrasts my whole later training in the knowledge of the good and the evil of my own conduct is founded. My conscience grows out of this chaos, — grows as my reason grows, through the effort to get harmony into this chaos. However reasonable I become, however high the grade of the conscientious ideals to which, through the struggle to win harmony, I finally attain, all of my own conscientious life is psychologically built upon the lowly foundations thus furnished by the troubled social life, that, together with my fellows, I must lead.

## VII

But now it needs no great pessimism to observe that our ordinary social life is one in which there is a great deal of inevitable tension, or natural disharmony. Such ten-

sion, and such disharmony, are due not necessarily to the graver vices of men. The gravest disharmonies often result merely from the mutual misunderstandings of men. There are so many of us. We naturally differ so much from one another. We comprehend each other so ill, or, at best, with such difficulty. Hence social tension is, so to speak, the primary state of any new social enterprise, and can be relieved only through special and constantly renewed efforts.

But this simple observation leads to another. If our social life, owing to the number, the variety, and the ignorance of the individuals who make up our social world, is prevailingly or primarily one in which strained social situations, — forms of social tension, — social troubles, are present, and are constantly renewed, it follows that every individual who is to reach a high grade of self-consciousness as to his own doings, will be awakened to his observation of himself by one or another form or instance of social tension. As a fact, it is rivalry, or contest, or

criticism that first, as we have seen, naturally brings to my notice what I am doing. And the obvious rule is that, within reasonable limits, the greater the social tension of the situation in which I am placed, the sharper and clearer does my social contrast with my fellows become to me. And thus, the greater the social tension is, the more do I become aware, through such situations, both about my own conduct, and about my plans and ideals, and about my will.

In brief, my moral self-consciousness is bred in me through social situations that involve, — not necessarily any physical conflict with my fellows, — but, in general, some form of social conflict, — conflict such as engenders mutual criticism. Man need not be, when civilized, at war with his fellows in the sense of using the sword against them. But he comes to self-consciousness as a moral being through the spiritual warfare of mutual observation, of mutual criticism, of rivalry, — yes, too often through the warfare of envy and of gossip and of scandal-mongering, and

of whatever else belongs to the early training that many people give to their own consciences, through taking a more or less hostile account of the consciences of their neighbors. Such things result from the very conditions of high grades of self-consciousness about our conduct and our ideals.

The moral self, then, the natural conscience, is bred through situations that involve social tension. What follows?

## VIII

It follows that such tension, in each special case, indeed seems evil to us, and calls for relief. And in seeking for such relief, the social will, in its corporate capacity, the will of the community, forms its codes, its customary laws; and attempts to teach each of us how he ought to deal with his neighbors so as to promote the general social harmony. But these codes, — these forms of customary morality, — they have to be taught to us as conscious rules of conduct. They can only be taught to us by first teaching us to be more



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considerate, more self-observant, more formally conscientious than we were before. But to accomplish this aim is to bring us to some higher level of our general self-consciousness concerning our own doings. And this can be done, as a rule, only by applying to us some new form of social discipline which, in general, introduces still new and more complex kinds of tension, — new social contrasts between the general will and our own will, new conflicts between the self and its world.

Our social training thus teaches us to know ourselves through a process which arouses our self-will; and this tendency grows with what it feeds upon. The higher the training and the more cultivated and elaborate is our socially trained conscience, — the more highly conscious our estimate of our own value becomes, and so, in general, the stronger grows our self-will.

This is a commonplace; but it is precisely upon this very commonplace that the moral burden of the typical individual, trained



under natural social conditions, rests. If the individual is no defective or degenerate, but a fairly good member of his stock, his conduct may be trained by effective social discipline into a more or less admirable conformity to the standards of the general will. But his conduct is not the same as his own consciousness about his conduct; or, in other words, his deeds and his ideals are not necessarily in mutual agreement. Meanwhile, his consciousness about his conduct, his ideals, his conscience, are all trained, under ordinary conditions, by a social process that begins in social troubles, in tensions, in rivalries, in contests, and that naturally continues, the farther it goes, to become more and more a process which introduces new and more complex conflicts.

This evil constantly increases. The burden grows heavier. Society can, by its ordinary skill, train many to be its servants, — servants who, being under rigid discipline, submit because they must. But precisely in proportion as society becomes more skilled

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in the external forms of culture, it trains its servants by a process that breeds spiritual enemies. That is, it breeds men who, even when they keep the peace, are inwardly enemies one of another; because every man, in a highly cultivated social world, is trained to moral self-consciousness by his social conflicts. And these same men are inwardly enemies of the collective social will itself, because in a highly cultivated social order the social will is oppressively vast, and the individual is trained to self-consciousness by a process which shows him the contrast between his own will and this, which so far seems to him a vast impersonal social will. He may obey. That is conduct. But he will naturally revolt inwardly; and that is his inevitable form of spiritual self-assertion, so long as he is trained to self-consciousness in this way, and is still without the spiritual transformations that some higher form of love for the community, — some form of loyalty, and that alone, — can bring.

This revolt will tend to increase as culture

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advances. High social cultivation breeds spiritual enmities. For it trains what we in our day call individualism, and, upon precisely its most cultivated levels, glories in creating highly conscious individuals. But these individuals are brought to consciousness by their social contrasts and conflicts. Their very consciences are tainted by the original sin of social contentiousness. The higher the cultivation, the vaster and deeper are precisely the more spiritual and the more significant of these inward and outward conflicts. Cultivation breeds civilized conduct; it also breeds conscious independence of spirit and deep inner opposition to all mere external authority.

Before this sort of moral evil the moral individual, thus cultivated, is, if viewed merely as a creature of cultivation, powerless. His very conscience is the product of spiritual warfare, and its knowledge of good and evil is tainted by its origin. The burden grows; and the moral individual cannot bear it, unless his whole type of self-conscious-

ness is transformed by a new spiritual power which this type of cultivation can never of itself furnish.

For the moral cultivation just described is cultivation in "the law"; that is, in the rules of the social will. But such cultivation breeds individualism; that is, breeds consciousness of self-will. And the burden of this self-will increases with cultivation.

As we all know, individualism, viewed as a highly potent social tendency, is a product of high cultivation. It is also a relatively modern product of such cultivation. Savages appear to know little about individualism. Where tribal custom is almighty, the individual is trained to conduct, but not to a high grade of self-consciousness. Hence the individual, in a primitive community, submits; but also he has no very elaborate conscience. Among most ancient peoples, individualism was still nearly unknown.

Two ancient peoples, living under special conditions and possessing an extraordinary genius, developed very high grades of indi-

vidualism. One of these peoples was Israel, — especially that fragment of later Israel to which Judaism was due. Paul well knew what was the nature and the meaning of just that high development of individuality which Judaism had in his day made possible.

The other one of these peoples was the Greek people. Their individualism, their high type of self-consciousness regarding conduct, showed what is meant by being, as every highly individualistic type of civilization since their day has been, characteristically merciless to individuals. Greek individualism devoured its own children. The consciousness of social opposition determined the high grade of self-consciousness of the Greek genius. It also determined the course of Greek history and politics; and so the greatest example of national genius which the world has ever seen promptly destroyed its own life, just because its self-consciousness was due to social conflicts and intensified them. The original sin of its own cultivation was the doom of that cultivation.

In the modern world the habit of forming a high grade of individual consciousness has now become settled. We have learned the lesson that Israel and Greece taught. Hence we speak of personal moral independence as if it were our characteristic spiritual ideal. This ideal is now fostered still more highly than ever before, — is fostered by the vastness of our modern social forces, and by the way in which these forces are to-day used to train the individual consciousness which opposes itself to them, and which is trained to this sort of opposition.

The result is that the training of the cultivated individual, under modern conditions, uses, on the one hand, all the motives of what Paul calls “the flesh,” — all the natural endowment of man the social being, — but develops this fleshly nature so that it is trained to self-consciousness by emphasizing every sort and grade of more skilful opposition to the very social will that trains it. Our modern world is therefore peculiarly fitted to illustrate the thesis of Paul’s seventh



chapter of the epistle to the Romans. To that chapter let us now, for a moment, return.

## IX

The difficulty of the argument of Paul's seventh chapter lies in the fact that in speaking of our sinful nature, he emphasizes three apparently conflicting considerations: First, he asserts that sinfulness belongs to our elemental nature, to our flesh as it is at birth; secondly, he insists that sin is not cured but increased by cultivation, unless the power of the Divine Spirit intervenes and transforms us into new creatures; thirdly, he declares that our sinfulness belongs not to especially defective or degenerate sinners, but to the race in its corporate capacity, so that no one is privileged to escape by any good deed of his own, since we are all naturally under the curse.

To the first consideration many modern men reply that at birth we have only untrained instinctive predispositions, which may, under



training, turn out well or ill, but which, until training turns them into conduct, are innocent.

This comment is true, but does not touch Paul's main thesis, which is that, being as to the flesh what we are, — that is, being essentially social animals, — all our natural moral cultivation, if successful, can only make us aware of our sinfulness. "Howbeit, I had not known sin but for the law." It is precisely this thesis which the natural history of the training of our ordinary moral self-consciousness illustrates. This training usually takes place through impressing the social will upon the individual by means of discipline. The result must be judged not by the accidental fortunes of this or of that formally virtuous or obviously vicious individual. The true problem lies deeper than we are accustomed to look. It is just that problem which Paul understands.

Train me to morality by the ordinary modes of discipline and you do two things: First, and especially under modern conditions, you teach me so-called independence, self-reliance.

You teach me to know and to prize from the depths of my soul, my own individual will. The higher the civilization in which this mode of training is followed, the more I become an individualist among mutually hostile individualists, a citizen of a world where all are consciously free to think ill of one another, and to say, to every external authority: "My will, not thine, be done."

But this teaching of independence is also a teaching of distraction and inner despair. For, if I indeed am intelligent, I also learn that, in a highly cultivated civilization, the social will is mighty, and daily grows mightier, and must, ordinarily and outwardly, prevail unless chaos is to come. Hence you indeed may discipline me into obedience, but it is a distracted and wilful obedience, which constantly wars with the very dignity of spirit which my training teaches me to revere. On the one hand, as reasonable being, I say: "I ought to submit; for law is mighty; and I would not, if I could, bring anarchy." So much I say, if I am indeed successfully

trained. But I will not obey with the inner man. For I am the being of inalienable individual rights, of unconquerable independence. I have my own law in my own members, which, however I seem to obey, is at war with the social will. I am the divided self. The more I struggle to escape through my moral cultivation, the more I discern my divided state. Oh, wretched man that I am !

Now this my divided state, this my distraction of will, is no mishap of my private fortune. It belongs to the human race, as a race capable of high moral cultivation. It is the misfortune, the doom of man the social animal, if you train him through the discipline of social tension, through troubles with his neighbors, through opposition and through social conflict, through what Whistler called "the gentle art of making enemies." This, apart from all legends, is Paul's thesis; and it is true to human nature. The more outer law there is in our cultivation, the more inner rebellion there is in the very individuals whom

our cultivation creates. And this moral burden of the individual is also the burden of the race, precisely in so far as it is a race that is social in a human sense.

Possibly all this may still seem to you the mere construction of a theorist. And yet an age that, like our own, faces in new forms the conflicts between what we often name individualism and collectivism, — a time such as the present one, when every new enlargement of our vast corporations is followed by a new development of strikes and of industrial conflicts, — a time, I say, such as ours ought to know where the original sin of our social nature lies.

For our time shows us that *individualism and collectivism are tendencies, each of which, as our social order grows, intensifies the other.* The more the social will expresses itself in vast organizations of collective power, the more are individuals trained to be aware of their own personal wants and choices and ideals, and of the vast opportunities that would be theirs if they could but gain control of

these social forces. The more, in sum, does their individual self-will become conscious, deliberate, cultivated, and therefore dangerously alert and ingenious.

Yet, if the individuals in question are highly intelligent, and normally orderly in their social habits, their self-will, thus forcibly kept awake and watchful through the very powers which the collective will has devised, is no longer, in our own times, a merely stupid attempt to destroy all social authority. It need not be childishly vicious or grossly depraved, like Paul's Gentiles in his earlier chapters of the epistle to the Romans. It is a sensitive self-will, which feels the importance of the social forces, and which wants them to grow more powerful, so that haply they may be used by the individual himself.

And so, when opportunity offers, the individual self-will casts its vote in favor of new devices to enrich or to intensify the expression of the collective will. For it desires social powers. It wants them for its own

use. Hence, in its rebellion against authority, when such rebellion arises, it is a consciously divided self-will, which takes in our day no form more frequently than the general form of moral unrest, of discontent with its own most ardent desires. It needs only a little more emphasis upon moral or religious problems than, in worldly people, in our day, it displays, in order to be driven to utter from a full heart Paul's word: "O wretched man that I am!"

For the highly trained modern agitator, or the plastic disciple of agitators, if both intelligent and reasonably orderly in habits, is intensely *both* an individualist and a man who needs the collective will, who in countless ways and cases bows to that will, and votes for it, and increases its power. The individualism of such a man wars with his own collectivism; while each, as I insist, tends to inflame the other. As an agitator, the typically restless child of our age often insists upon heaping up new burdens of social control, — control that he indeed intends to



have others feel rather than himself. As individualist, longing to escape, perhaps from his economic cares, perhaps from the marriage bond, such a highly intelligent agitator may speak rebelliously of all restrictions, declare Nietzsche to be his prophet, and set out to be a Superman as if he were no social animal at all. Wretched man, by reason of his divided will, he is; and he needs only a little reflection to observe the fact.

But note: These are no mere accidents of our modern world. The division of the self thus determined, and thus increasing in our modern cultivation, is not due to the chance defects of this or of that more or less degenerate individual. Nor is it due merely to a man's more noxious instincts. This division is due to the very conditions to which the development of self-consciousness is subject, not only in our present social order, but in every civilization which has reached as high a grade of self-consciousness as that which Paul observed in himself and in his own civilization.



## X

The moral burden of the individual, as Paul conceives it, and as human nature makes it necessary, has now been characterized. The legend of Adam's transgression made the fall of man due to the sort of self-consciousness, to the knowledge of good and evil, which the crafty critical remarks of the wise serpent first suggested to man, and which the resulting transgression simply emphasized. What Paul's psychology, translated into more modern terms, teaches, is that the moral self-consciousness of every one of us gets its cultivation from our social order through a process which begins by craftily awakening us, as the serpent did Eve, through critical observations, and which then fascinates our divided will by giving us the serpent's counsels. "Ye shall be as gods." This is the lore of all individualism, and the vice of all our worldly social ambitions. The resulting diseases of self-consciousness are due to the inmost nature of our social race.

They belong to its very essence as a social race. They increase with cultivation. The individual cannot escape from the results of them through any deed of his own. For his will is trained by a process which taints his conscience with the original sin of self-will, of clever hostility to the very social order upon which he constantly grows more and more consciously dependent.

What is the remedy? What is the escape? Paul's answer is simple. To his mind a new revelation has been made, from a spiritual realm wholly above our social order and its conflicts. Yet this revelation is, in a new way, social. For it tells us: "There is a certain divinely instituted community. It is no mere collection of individuals, with laws and customs and quarrels. Nor is its unity merely that of a mighty but, to our own will, an alien power. Its indwelling spirit is concrete and living, but is also a loving spirit. It is the body of Christ. The risen Lord dwells in it, and is its life. It is as much a person as he was when he walked the earth.

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And he is as much the spirit of that community as he is a person. Love that community; let its spirit, through this love, become your own. Let its Lord be your Lord. Be one in him and with him and with his Church. And lo! the natural self is dead. The new life takes possession of you. You are a new creature. The law has no dominion over you. In the universal community you live in the spirit; and hence for the only self, the only self-consciousness, the only knowledge of your own deeds which you possess or tolerate: these are one with the spirit of the Lord and of the community."

Translated into the terms that I ventured to use in our last lecture, Paul's doctrine is that salvation comes through loyalty. Loyalty involves an essentially new type of self-consciousness, — the consciousness of one who loves a community as a person. Not social training, but the miracle of this love, creates the new type of self-consciousness.

Only (as Paul holds) you must find the universal community to which to be loyal;

and you must learn to know its Lord, whose body it is, and whose spirit is its life.

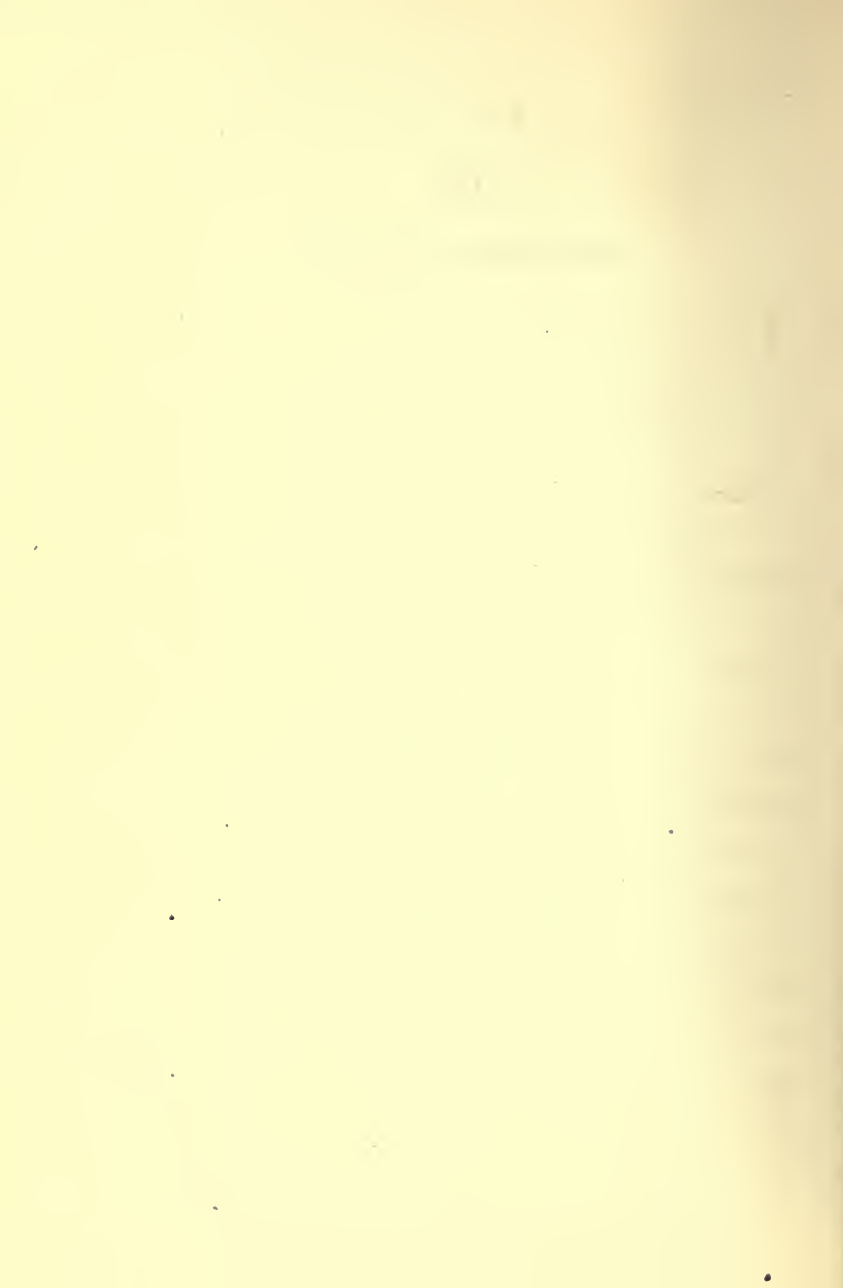
Paul is assured that he knows this universal community and this Lord. But, apart from Paul's religious faith, the perfectly human truth remains that loyalty (which is the love of a community conceived as a person on a level superior to that of any human individual) — loyalty, — and the devotion of the self to the cause of the community, — loyalty, is the only cure for the natural warfare of the collective and of the individual will, — a warfare which no moral cultivation without loyalty can ever end, but which all cultivation, apart from such devoted and transforming love of the community, only inflames and increases.

Thus the second of the essential ideas of Christianity illustrates the first, and is in turn illumined by the first. This, I believe is the deeper sense and truth of the doctrine of the inherent moral taint of the social individual.



# IV

## THE REALM OF GRACE





## LECTURE IV

### THE REALM OF GRACE

**T**HE Christian world has been still more deeply influenced by the apostle Paul's teaching concerning the divine grace that saves, than by his account of the moral burden of the individual. The traditional lore of salvation is more winning, and, in many respects, less technical, than is the Christian teaching regarding our lost state.

The present lecture is to be devoted to a study of some aspects of the doctrine of grace. Yet, since our moral burden, and our escape from that burden, are matters intimately connected, we shall find that both topics belong to the exposition of the same essential Christian idea, and that, at the same time, they throw new light upon the first of the three essential Christian ideas, the idea of the universal community. Our present task will therefore enable us to reach a new stage in our survey of the larger connections of the Christian doctrine of life.

## I

Christianity is most familiarly known as a religion of love, and this view, as far as it extends, is a true view of Christianity. Our second lecture has shown us, however, that this characterization is inadequate, because it does not render justly clear the nature of the objects to which, in our human world, Christian love is most deeply and essentially devoted. A man is known by the company that he keeps. In its human relations, and apart from an explicit account of its faith concerning the realm of the gods, or concerning God, a religion can be justly estimated only when you understand what kinds and grades of human beings it bids you recognize, as well as what it counsels you to do in presence of the beings of each grade. Now, as our second lecture endeavored to point out, there are in the human world two profoundly different grades, or levels, of mental beings, — namely, the beings that we usually call human individuals, and the beings that we call communities.

Of the first of these two grades, or levels, of human beings, any one man whom you may choose to mention is an example. His organism is, in the physical world, separate from the organisms of his fellows. The expressive movements of this organism, his behavior, his gestures, his voice, his coherent course of conduct, the traces that his deeds leave behind them, — these, in your opinion, make more or less manifest to you the life of his mind. And, in your usual opinion, his mind is, on the whole, at least as separate from the minds of other men, as his organism, and his expressive bodily movements, are physically sundered from theirs.

Of the second of these two levels of human beings, a well-trained chorus, or an orchestra at a concert; or an athletic team, or a rowing crew, during a contest; or a committee, or a board, sitting in deliberation upon some matter of business; or a high court consisting of several members, who at length reach what legally constitutes “the decision of the court,” — all these are good examples. Each one of

these is, in its own way, a community. The vaster communities, real and ideal, which we mentioned, by way of illustration, in our second lecture, also serve as instances of real beings with minds, whose grade or level is not that of the ordinary human individuals.

Any highly organized community — so in our second lecture we argued — is as truly a human being as you and I are individually human. Only a community is not what we usually call an individual human being; because it has no one separate and internally well-knit physical organism of its own; and because its mind, if you attribute to it any one mind, is therefore not manifested through the expressive movements of such a single separate human organism.

Yet there are reasons for attributing to a community a mind of its own. Some of these reasons were briefly indicated in our second lecture; and they will call for a further scrutiny hereafter. Just here it concerns my purpose simply to call attention to the former argument, and to say, that the difference be-

tween the individual human beings of our ordinary social intercourse, and the communities, is a difference justly characterized, in my opinion, by speaking of these two as *grades* or *levels* of human life.

The communities are vastly more complex, and, in many ways, are also immeasurably more potent and enduring than are the individuals. Their mental life possesses, as Wundt has pointed out, a psychology of its own, which can be systematically studied. Their mental existence is no mere creation of abstract thinking or of metaphor; and is no more a topic for mystical insight, or for fantastic speculation, than is the mental existence of an individual man. As empirical facts, communities are known to us by their deeds, by their workings, by their intelligent and coherent behavior, just as the minds of our individual neighbors are known to us through their expressions.

Considered as merely natural existences, communities, like individuals, may be either good or evil, beneficent or mischievous. The

level of mental existence which belongs to communities insures their complexity; and renders them, in general, far more potent and, for certain purposes and in certain of their activities, much more intelligent than are the human individuals whose separate physical organisms we ordinarily regard as signs of so many separate minds.

But a community, — in so far like a fallen angel, — may be as base and depraved as any individual man can become, and may be far worse than a man. Communities may make unjust war, may enslave mankind, may deceive and betray and torment as basely as do individuals, only more dangerously. The question whether communities are or are not real human beings, with their own level of mental existence, is therefore quite distinct from the question as to what worth this or that community possesses in the spiritual world. And, in our study of the doctrine of grace, we shall find how intimately the Christian teaching concerning the salvation of the individual man is bound up with the



Christian definition, both of the saving community and of the power which, according to the Christian tradition, has redeemed that community, and has infused divine life into the level of human existence which this community, and not any merely human individual, occupies.

## II

To the two levels of human mental existence correspond two possible forms of love: love for human individuals; love for communities. In our second lecture we spoke of the natural fact that communities can be the object of love; and that this love may lead to the complete practical devotion of an individual to the community which he loves. Such vital and effective love of an individual for a community constitutes what we called, in that lecture, Loyalty. And when, in our second lecture, the conception of loyalty as the love of an individual for a being that is on the level of a community first entered our argument, we approached this conception by



using, as illustrations, what might be called either the more natural or the more primitive types of loyalty, — types such as grow out of family life, and tribal solidarity, and war. As we pointed out in the second lecture, Christianity is essentially a religion of loyalty. We have learned in our third lecture that, for Christianity, the problem of loyalty is enriched, and meanwhile made more difficult, by the nature of that ideal or universal community to which Paul first invited his converts to be loyal.

Paul and his apostolic Christians were not content with family loyalty, or with clan loyalty, or with a love for any community that they conceived as merely natural in its origin. A miracle, as they held, had created the body of Christ. To this new spiritual being, whose level was that of a community, and whose membership was human, but whose origin was, in their opinion, divine, their love and their life were due. Christianity was the religion of loyalty to this new creation. The idea involved has since remained, with all its

problems and tragedies, essential to Christianity.

Our study of the moral burden of the individual has now prepared us for a new insight into the special problem which, ever since Paul's time, Christian loyalty has had to solve. This is no longer anywhere nearly as free from complications as are the problems which family loyalty and clan loyalty present, manifold as those problems of natural loyalty actually are. Even the idea of the rational brotherhood of mankind, of the universal community as the Stoics conceived it, presents no problems nearly as complex as is the problem which the Pauline concept of charity, and of Christian loyalty, has to meet.

For Paul, as you now know, finds that the individual man has to be won over, not to a loyalty which at first seems, to the fleshly mind, natural, but to an essentially new life. The natural man has to be delivered from a doom to which "the law" only binds him faster, the more he seeks to escape. And this escape involves finding, for the individual

man, a community to which, when the new life comes, he is to be thenceforth loyal as no natural clan loyalty or family loyalty could make him.

The power that gives to the Christian convert the new loyalty is what Paul calls Grace. And the community to which, when grace saves him, the convert is thenceforth to be loyal, we may here venture to call by a name which we have not hitherto used. Let this name be "The Beloved Community." This is another name for what we before called the Universal Community. Only now the universal community will appear to us in a new light, in view of its relations to the doctrine of grace. And the realm of this Beloved Community, whose relations Christianity conceives, for the most part, in supernatural terms, will constitute what, in our discussion, shall be meant by the term "The Realm of Grace."

## III

If we suppose that the two levels of human mental existence have both of them been recognized as real, and that hereupon the problem of finding an ideally lovable community has been, for a given individual, solved, so that this individual is sure of his love and loyalty for the community which has won his service, then, from the point of view of that individual, the two levels of human life will indeed be no longer merely distinguished by their complexity, or by their might, or by their grade of intelligence. Henceforth, for the loyal soul, the distinction between the levels, so far as the object of his loyalty is concerned, will be a distinction in value, and a vast one.

The beloved community embodies, for its lover, values which no human individual, viewed as a detached being, could even remotely approach. And in a corresponding way, the love which inspires the loyal soul has been transformed; and is not such as could be given to a detached human individual.

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The human beings whom we distinguish in our daily life, and recognize through the seeming and the doings of their separate organisms, are real indeed, and are genuinely distinct individuals. But when we love them, our love, however ideal or devoted, has its level and its value determined by their own. And if this love for human individuals is the only form of human love that we know, both our morality and our religion are limited accordingly, and remain on a correspondingly lower level.

Such human love knows its objects precisely as Paul declared that, henceforth, he would no longer know Christ, — namely, “after the flesh.” Loyalty knows its object (if I may again adapt Paul’s word) “after the Spirit.” For Paul’s expression here refers, in so far as he speaks of human objects at all, to the unity of the spirit which he conceived to be characteristic of the Christian community, whereof Christ was, to the Apostle’s mind, both the head and the divine life. Hence you see how vastly significant, for our

view of Christianity, is a comprehension of what is meant by religion of loyalty.

With this indication of the connections which link the thoughts of our lecture on the universal community with the task which lies next in our path, let us turn, first to Paul's own account of the doctrine of grace, and then to the later development of Paul's teachings into those views about the Realm of Grace which came to be classic for the later Christian consciousness. Our own interest in all these matters is here still an interest, first in the foundation which the Christian ideas possess in human nature, and secondly in the ethical and religious values which are here in question. And we still postpone any effort to pass judgment upon metaphysical problems, or to decide the truth as to traditional dogmas.

#### IV

Let us next summarily review the original and distinctively Pauline doctrine, both of our fallen state and of the grace which saves.



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The last lecture furnished the materials for such a review. The pith of the matter can be expressed, in terms of purely human psychology, thus: Man's fallen state is due to his nature as a social animal. This nature is such that you can train his conscience only by awakening his self-will. By self-will, I here mean, as Paul meant, man's conscious and active assertion of his own individual desires, worth, and undertakings, over against the will of his fellow, and over against the social will. Another name for this sort of conscious self-will is the modern term "individualism," when it is used to mean the tendency to prefer what the individual man demands to what the collective will requires. In general, and upon high levels of human intelligence, when you train individualism, you also train collectivism; that is, you train in the individual a respect for the collective will. And it belongs to Paul's very deep and searching insight to assert that these two tendencies—the tendency towards individualism, and that towards collectivism—do not exclude, but intensify and inflame each other.



Training, if formally successful in producing the skilful member of human society, breeds respect, although not love, for "the law," that is, for the expression of the collective will. But training also makes the individual conscious of the "other law" in "his members," which "wars against" the law of the social will. The result may be, for his outward conduct, whatever the individual's wits and powers make it. But so far as this result is due to cultivation in intelligent conduct, it inevitably leads to an inner division of the self, a disease of self-consciousness, which Paul finds to be the curse of all merely natural human civilization.

This curse is rooted in the primal constitution which makes man social, and which adapts him to win his intelligence through social conflicts with his neighbors. Hence the curse belongs to the whole "flesh" of man; for by "flesh" Paul means whatever first expresses itself in our instincts and thus lies at the basis of our training, and so of our natural life. The curse afflicts equally the

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race and the individual. Man is by inheritance adapted for this training to self-will and to inner division.

The social order, in training individuals, therefore breeds conscious sinners; and sins both in them and against them. The natural community is, in its united collective will, a community of sin. Its state is made, by its vast powers, worse than that of the individual. But it trains the individual to be as great a sinner as his powers permit.

If you need illustrations, Paul teaches you to look for them in the whole social order, both of Jews and of Gentiles. But vices and crimes, frequent as they are, merely illustrate the principle. The disease lies much deeper than outward conduct can show; and respectability of behavior brings no relief. All are under the curse. Cultivation increases the curse. The individual is helpless to escape by any will or deed of his own.

The only escape lies in Loyalty. Loyalty, in the individual, is his love for an united community, expressed in a life of devotion to

that community. But such love can be true love only if the united community both exists and is lovable. For training makes self-will fastidious, and abiding love for a community difficult.

In fact, no social training that a community can give to its members can train such love in those who have it not, or who do not win it through other aid than their training supplies. And no social will that men can intelligently devise, apart from previously active and effective loyalty, can make a community lovable. The creation of the truly lovable community, and the awakening of the highly trained individual to a true love for that community, are, to Paul's mind, spiritual triumphs beyond the wit of man to devise, and beyond the power of man to accomplish. That which actually accomplishes these triumphs is what Paul means by the divine grace.

## V

One further principle as to the human workings of this grace must still be mentioned, in order to complete our sketch of the foundations which our actual nature, disordered though it be, furnishes, not for the comprehension of this miracle of saving love, but for an account of the conditions under which the miracle takes place, so far as these conditions can fall under our human observation.

Natural love of individuals for communities, as we saw in our second lecture, appears in case of family loyalty, and in case of patriotism; and seems to involve no miracle of grace. But such love of an individual for a community, in so far as such love is the product of our ordinary human nature, tends to be limited or hindered by the influences of cultivation, and is blindly strongest in those who have not yet reached high grades of cultivation. It arises as mother-love or as tribal solidarity arises, from the depths of our still unconscious social nature. The infant or the child loves

its home; the mother, her babe; the primitive man, his group.

But loyalty of the type that is in question when our salvation, in Paul's sense of salvation, is to be won, is the loyalty which springs up *after* the individual self-will has been trained through the processes just characterized. It is the loyalty that conquers us, even when we have become enemies of the law. It finds us as such enemies, and transforms us. It is the love which leads the already alert and rebellious self-will to devote all that it has won to the cause which henceforth is to remain, by its own choice, its beloved.

Such loyalty is not the blind instinctive affection from which cultivation inevitably alienates us, by awakening our self-will. It is the love that overcomes the already fully awakened individual. We cannot choose to fall thus in love. Only when once thus in love, can we choose to remain lovers.

Now such love comes from some previous love which belongs to the same high and difficult grade. The origin of this higher form of

loyalty is hard to trace, unless some leader is first there, to be the source of loyalty in other men. If such a leader there is, his own loyalty may become, through his example, the origin of a loyalty in which the men of many generations may find salvation. You are first made loyal through the power of some one else who is already loyal.

But the loyal man must also be, as we have just said, a member of a lovable community. How can such a community originate? The family, as we have also remarked, is lovable to the dependent child. Yet often the wayward youth is socially trained to a point where such dependence, just because he has come to clear self-consciousness, seems to him unintelligible; and herewith his father's house ceases to be, for him, any longer lovable.

Great loyalty — loyalty such as Paul himself had in mind when he talked of divine grace — must be awakened by a community sufficiently lovable to win the enduring devotion of one who, like Paul, has first been



trained to possess and to keep an obstinately critical and independent attitude of spirit, — an attitude such as, in fact, Paul kept to the end of his life, side by side with his own loyalty, and in a wondrous harmony therewith.

Such a marvellous union of unconquerable and even wilful self-consciousness, with an absolute loyalty to the cause of his life, breathes in every word of Paul's more controversial outbursts, as well as in all of his more fervent exhortations. Such loyalty is no mere childhood love of home. It comes only as a rushing, mighty wind.

In order to be thus lovable to the critical and naturally rebellious soul, the Beloved Community must be, quite unlike a natural social group, whose life consists of laws and quarrels, of a collective will, and of individual rebellion. This community must be an union of members who first love it. The unity of love must pervade it, before the individual member can find it lovable. Yet unless the individuals first love it, how can the unity of love come to pervade it?



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The origin of loyalty, if it is to arise, — not as the childhood love of one's home arises, unconsciously and instinctively ; but as Paul's love for the Church arises, consciously and with a saving power, — in the life of one who is first trained to all the conscious enmities of the natural social order, — the origin of loyalty seems thus to resemble, in a measure, the origin of life, as the modern man views that problem. A living being is the offspring of a living being. And, in a similar fashion, highly conscious loyalty presupposes a previous loyalty, only a loyalty of even higher level than its own, as its source. Loyalty needs for its beginnings the inspiring leader who teaches by the example of his spirit. But the leader, in order to inspire to loyalty, must himself be loyal. In order to be loyal, he must himself have found, or have founded, his lovable community. And this, in order to be lovable, and a community, must already consist of loyal and loving members. It cannot win the love of the lost soul who is to be saved, unless it already consists

of those who have been saved by their love for it. One moves thus in a circle. Only some miracle of grace (as it would seem) can initiate the new life, either in the individuals who are to love communities, or in the communities that are to be worthy of their love.

## VI

If the miracle occurs, and then works according to the rules which, in fact, the contagion of love usually seems to follow, the one who effects the first great transformation and initiates the high type of loyalty in the distracted social world must, it would seem, combine in himself, in some way, the nature which a highly trained social individual develops as he becomes self-conscious, with the nature which a community possesses when it becomes intimately united in the bonds of brotherly love, so that it is "one undivided soul of many a soul."

For the new life of loyalty, if it first appears at all, will arise as a bond linking many highly self-conscious and mutually estranged

social individuals in one; but this bond can come to mean anything living and real to these individuals, only in case some potent and loyal individual, acting as leader, first declares that for him it is real. In such a leader, and in his spirit, the community will begin its own life, if the leader has the power to create what he loves.

The individual who initiates this process will then plausibly appear to an onlooker, such as Paul was when he was converted, to be at once an individual and the spirit—the very life — of a community. But his origin will be inexplicable in terms of the processes which he himself originates. His power will come from another level than our own. And of the workings of this grace, when it has appeared, we can chiefly say this: That such love is propagated by personal example, although how, we cannot explain.

We know how Paul conceives the beginning of the new life wherein Christian salvation is to be found. This beginning he refers to the work of Christ. The Master was an

individual man. To Paul's mind, his mission was divine. He both knew and loved his community before it existed on earth; for his foreknowledge was one with that of the God whose will he came to accomplish. On earth he called into this community its first members. He suffered and died that it might have life. Through his death and in his life the community lives. *He is now identical with the spirit of this community.* This, according to Paul, was the divine grace which began the process of salvation for man. In the individual life of each Christian this same process appears as a new act of grace. Its outcome is the new life of loyalty to which the convert is henceforth devoted.

## VII

With any criticism of the religious beliefs of Paul, and with their metaphysical bearings, we are not here concerned. What we have attempted, in this sketch, is an indication of the foundation which human nature furnishes for the Pauline doctrine of divine grace. The

human problem, as you see, when it is viewed quite apart from the realm of the gods, is the problem of the value and the origin of loyalty.

The value of loyalty can readily be defined in simply human terms. Man, the social being, naturally, and in one sense helplessly, depends on his communities. Sundered from them, he has neither worth nor wit, but wanders in waste places, and, when he returns, finds the lonely house of his individual life empty, swept, and garnished.

But, on the other hand, his communities, to which he thus owes all his natural powers, train him by teaching him self-will, and so teach him the arts of spiritual hatred. The result is distraction, — spiritual death. Escape through any mere multitude of loves for other individuals is impossible. For such loves, unless they are united by some supreme loyalty, are capricious fondnesses for other individuals, who, by nature and by social training, are as lonely and as distracted as their lover himself. Mere altruism is no cure for the spiritual disease of cultivation.

No wonder, then, that early Buddhism, fully sensible of the disorders of self-will and of the natural consciousness, sees no escape but through the renunciation of all that is individual, and preaches the passionless calm of knowing only what is no longer a self at all. If birth and training mean only distraction, why not look for the cessation of all birth, and the extinction of desire?

Loyalty, if it comes at all, has the value of a love which does not so much renounce the individual self as devote the self, with all its consciousness and its powers, to an all-embracing unity of individuals in one realm of spiritual harmony. The object of such devotion is, in ideal, the community which is absolutely lovable, because absolutely united, conscious, but above all distractions of the separate self-will of its members. Loyalty demands many members, but one body; many gifts, but one spirit.

The value of this ideal lies in its vision of an activity which is endless, but always at rest in its own harmony. Such a vision, as



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Mr. F. C. S. Schiller has well pointed out, Aristotle possessed when, in dealing with quite another problem than the one now directly before us, he defined the life of God, — the *Energieia* of the unmoved mover. Such a vision, but interpreted in terms which were quite as human as they were divine, Paul possessed when he wrote to the Corinthians concerning the spiritual gifts. This was Paul's beatific vision, granted him even while he was in the life of earthly tribulation, the vision of the Charity which never faileth, — the vision of Charity as still the greatest of the Christian graces in the world whereto the saved are to be translated.

The realm of absolute loyalty, of the Pauline charity, is what Christianity opposes to the Buddhistic Nirvana. In Nirvana the Buddha sees all, but is no longer an individual, and neither desires nor wills anything whatever. In Paul's vision of beatitude, when I shall know even as I am known, an endlessly restful spiritual activity, the activity of the glorified and triumphant Church, fills all the



scene. It is an activity of individuals who still will, and perform the deeds of love, and endlessly aim to renew what they possess, — the life of the perfected and perfectly lovable community, where all are one in Christ.

Paul's vision unites, then, Aristotle's ideal of the divine beatitude, always active yet always at the goal, with his own perfectly practical and concrete ideal of what the united Church, as a community, should be, and in the perfect state, as he thinks, will be.

Thus the value of the loyal life, and of the love of the ideal community, is expressible in perfectly human terms. The problem of grace is the problem of the origin of loyalty; and is again a perfectly human problem. Paul's solution, in the opening of his letter to the Ephesians, "By grace are ye saved, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God," is for him the inevitable translation into religious speech of that comment upon the origin of loyalty which we have just, in summary form, stated. The origin of the power of grace is psychologically inexplicable, as all

transforming love is. The object to which grace directs the convert's mind is above the level of any human individual.

The realm of grace is the realm of the powers and the gifts that save, by thus originating and sustaining and informing the loyal life. This realm contains, at the very least, three essentially necessary constituent members: First, the ideally lovable community of many individuals in one spiritual bond; secondly, the spirit of this community, which is present both as the human individual whose power originated and whose example, whose life and death, have led and still guide the community, and as the united spiritual activity of the whole community; thirdly, Charity itself, the love of the community by all its members, and of the members by the community.

To the religion of Paul, all these things must be divine. They all have their perfectly human correlate and foundation wherever the loyal life exists.

## VIII

We now may see how the characterization of Christianity as not only a religion of love, but as also, in essence, a religion of loyalty, tends to throw light upon some of the otherwise most difficult aspects of the problem of Christianity. We can already predict how great this light, if it grows, promises to become.

Christianity is not the only religion in whose conceptions and experiences a community has been central. Loyalty has not left itself without a witness in many ages of human life, and in many peoples. And all the higher forms of loyalty are, in their spirit, religious; for they rest upon the discovery, or upon the faith, that, in all the darkness of our earthly existence, we individual human beings, separate as our organisms seem in their physical weakness, and sundered as our souls appear by their narrowness, and by their diverse loves and fortunes, are not as much alone, and not as helpless, in our chaos of divided will, as we seem.

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For we are members one of another, and members, too, of a real life that, although human, is nevertheless, when it is lovable, also above the level upon which we, the separate individuals, live our existence. By our organisms and by our individual divisions of knowledge and of purpose, we are chained to an order of nature. By our loyalty, and by the real communities to which we are worthily loyal, we are linked with a level of mental existence such that, when compared with our individual existence, this higher level lies in the direction of the divine. Whatever the origin of men's ideals of their gods, there should be no doubt that these gods have often been conceived, by their worshippers, as the representatives of some human community, and as in some sense identical with that community.

But loyalty exists in countless forms and gradations. Christianity is characterized not only by the universality of the ideal community to which, in its greatest deeds and ages, it has, according to its intent, been loyal ;

but also by the depth and by the practical intensity and the efficacy of the love towards this community which has inspired its most representative leaders and reformers; and, finally, by the profoundly significant doctrines and customs to which it has been led in the course of its efforts to identify the being of its ideal community with the being of God.

Other religions have been inspired by loyalty. Other religions have identified a community with a divine being. And, occasionally, — yes, as the world has grown wiser and more united, increasingly, — non-Christian thinking and non-Christian religion have conceived an ideal community as inclusive as mankind, or as inclusive as the whole realm of beings with minds, however vast that realm may be.

But, historically speaking, Christianity has been distinguished by the concreteness and intensity with which, in the early stages of its growth, it grasped, loved, and served its own ideal of the visible community, supposed to be universal; which it called its Church.

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It has further been contrasted with other religions by the skill with which it gradually revised its views of the divine nature, in order to be able to identify the spirit that, as it believed, guided, inspired, and ruled this Church, with the spirit of the one whom it had come to worship as its risen Lord.

### IX

If we bear these facts in mind, there is much in the otherwise so difficult history of Christian dogma which we can easily see in a new light. I myself am far from being a technical theologian, and, in coming to the few fragments of an understanding of the meaning of the history of dogma which I possess, I owe much to views such as, in England, Professor Percy Gardner has set forth, both in his earlier discussions, and notably in his recent book on "The Religious Experience of the Apostle Paul." I also owe new light to the remarkable conclusions which Professor Troeltsch of Heidelberg states, at the close of his recently published volume on



“The Social Doctrines of the Christian Churches.”<sup>1</sup> I shall make no endeavor in this place to deal with those technical aspects of the history of dogma which lie beyond my province as a philosophical student of the Christian doctrine of life. But if I attempt to restate a very few of the results of others in terms of that view of the essence of Christian loyalty which does concern me, my word, at this stage of our discussion, must be as follows:—

Jesus unquestionably taught, in the best-attested, and in the best-known, of his sayings, love for all individual human beings. But he taught this as an organic part of his doctrine of the Kingdom of Heaven. The individual whom you are bidden to love as your brother and your neighbor is, even while Jesus depicts him, transformed before your eyes. For, first, he is no longer the separate organism with a separate mind and a detached being and destiny, whom you ordi-

<sup>1</sup> “Die sozialen Lehren der Christlichen Kirchen und Gruppen.”  
Tübingen, 1912.



narily loathe if he is your enemy, and resist if he endangers or oppresses you. No, — when he asks your aid, — though he be “the least of these my brethren” — he speaks with the voice of the judge of all men, with the voice that you hope to hear saying: “Come ye blessed of my Father, for I was hungered and ye gave me meat.” In other words, the real man, whom your eyes only seem to see, but whom on the level of ordinary human intercourse you simply ignore, actually belongs to another level of spiritual existence, above the level of our present life of divisions. The mystery of the real being of this man is open only to the divine Love.

If you view your neighbor as your Father would have you view him, you view him not only as God’s image, but also as God’s will and God’s love. If one asks for further light as to how the divine love views this man, the answer of Jesus, in the parables is, in substance, that this man is a member of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Kingdom of Heaven is obviously a

community. But this community is itself a mystery, — soon to be revealed, — but so far in the visible world, of which Jesus speaks, not yet to be discovered. This Kingdom is a treasure hid in a field. Its Master has gone into a far country. Watch and be ready. The Lord will soon return. The doctrine of Christian love, as thus taught by Jesus, so far as the records guide us, implies loyalty to the Kingdom; but expresses itself in forms which demand further interpretation, and which the Master intended to have further interpreted.

Now the apostolic churches held that those visions of the risen Lord, upon the memory and report of which their life as communities was so largely based, had begun for them this further interpretation. For them Christian loyalty soon became explicit; because their community became visible. And they believed their community to be the realization of the Kingdom; because they were sure that their risen Lord, whom the reported and recorded visions had shown, was henceforth in their midst as the spirit of this community.

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The realm of grace, thus present to the Christian consciousness, needed to be further explored. The explorers were those who helped to define dogmas. The later development of the principal dogmas of the post-apostolic Church was due to a process in which, as Professor Troeltsch persuasively insists,<sup>1</sup> speculation and the use of the results of ancient philosophy (however skilful and learned such processes might be), were in all the great crises of the history of doctrine wholly subordinate to practical religious motives.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the summary of his "Ergebnisse," on p. 967, *op. cit.*, Troeltsch says:—

"Es erhellt die Abhängigkeit der ganzen christlichen Vorstellungswelt und des Dogmas von den soziologischen Grundbedingungen, von der jeweiligen Gemeinschaftsidee. Das einzige besondere christliche Ur-Dogma, das Dogma von der Göttlichkeit des Christus, entsprang erst aus dem Christuskult und dieser wiederum aus der Notwendigkeit der Zusammenscharung der Gemeinde des neuen Geistes. Der Christuskult ist der Organisationspunkt einer christlichen Gemeinschaft und der Schöpfer des christlichen Dogmas. Da der Kultgott der Christen, nicht wie ein anderer Mysteriegott polytheistisch zu verstehen ist, sondern die erlösende Offenbarung des monotheistischen Gottes der Propheten darstellt, so wird aus dem Christudogma das Trinitätsdogma. Alle philosophischen und mythologischen Entlehnungen sind nur Mittel für diesen aus der inneren Notwendigkeit der christlichen Kultgemeinschaft sich bildenden Gedanken." My own text, at this point, interprets the

To use the phraseology that I myself am obliged to prefer: The common sense of the Christian Church had three problems to solve. First: It was loyal to the universal spiritual community; and upon this loyalty, according to its view, salvation depended. But this universal community must be something concrete and practically efficacious. Hence the visible Church had to be organized as the appearance on earth of God's Kingdom. For what the parables had left mysterious about the object and the life of love, an authoritative interpretation, valid for the believers of those times, must be found, and was found in the visible Church.

Secondly, The life, the unity, the spirit of the Church had meanwhile to be identified with the person and with the spirit of the risen and ascended Lord, whom the visions of the first disciples had made henceforth a central fact in the belief of the Church.

results which Troeltsch has reached, but also translates them into the terms of my own philosophy of loyalty. Lectures VII, VIII, and XV will show, in much greater fulness than is here possible, how far-reaching are the consequences which follow from accepting the interpretation of Christianity here merely sketched.

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The supernatural being whose body was now the Church, whose spirit was thus identified with the will and with the mind of a community, had once, as man, walked the earth, had really suffered and died. But since he had risen and ascended, henceforth — precisely because he was as the spirit whose body was this community, the Church — he was divine. Such was the essential article of the new faith.

Paul had already taught this. This very doctrine, in its further development, must be kept by the Church as concrete as the recorded life of the Master had been, as close to real life as the work of the visible Church was, and as true to the faith in the divine unity and destiny of the universal community, as Christian loyalty in all those formative centuries remained.

And yet all this must also be held in touch with that doctrine of the unity, the personality, and the ineffable transcendence of God, — that doctrine which was the heritage of the Church, both from the religion of Israel and

from the wisdom of Greece. Speaking in a purely historical and human sense, the dogma of the Trinity was the psychologically inevitable effort at a solution of this complex but intensely practical problem.

Loyalty to the community inspired this solution. The problem of the two natures of Christ, divine and human, was also psychologically forced upon Christianity by the very problem of the two levels of our human existence which I have just sketched.<sup>1</sup>

I speak still, not of the truth, but of the psychological motives of the dogma. The problem of the two levels of human existence is concrete, is practical, and exists for all of us. Every man who learns what the true goal of life is must live this twofold existence, — as separate individual, limited by the flesh of this maladjusted and dying organism, — yet also as member of a spiritual community which, if loyal, he loves, and in

<sup>1</sup> The relation of the traditional doctrine of the "two natures" to my present thesis regarding the "two levels" is something which I am solely responsible for asserting.



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which, in so far as he is loyal, he knows that his only true life is hidden, and is lived.

But for Christianity this problem of the two levels was vital, not only for the individual Christian, but also for the interpretation of the person of Christ, and for the life of the Church. Since, for historical and psychological reasons, the solution of this problem could not be, for Christianity, either polytheistic or disloyal in its spirit, the only humanly natural course was, first, to distinguish the transcendent divine being from the concretely active spirit whose daily work was that of the Church, and then also to distinguish both of these from the human individuality of the Master who had taught the mystery of the Kingdom, and who had then suffered and died, and, as was believed, had risen to create his Church. One had, I say, clearly to distinguish all these; to declare them all to be perfectly real facts. And then one had to unite and, in form, to identify them all, by means of dogmas which were much less merely ingenious speculations than



earnest resolutions to act and to believe whatever the loyal Christian life and the work of the Church demanded for the unity of humanity and for the salvation of the world.

The result may be estimated philosophically, as one may judge to be reasonable. I have said nothing about the metaphysical truth of these dogmas. But the result should not be judged as due to merely speculative subtleties, or as a practical degeneration of the spirit of the early Church.

The common sense of the Church was simply doing its best to express the meaning of its loyalty. This loyalty had its spiritual community and its human master. And its problems were the problems of all loyalty. And it was as a religion of loyalty, with a community, a Lord, and a Spirit to interpret, that Christianity was led to the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, and to the dogma of the Trinity.

## X

The psychological motives and the historical background of the capital dogmas of the Church are therefore best to be understood in the light of the conception of the universal community, if only one recognizes the historical fact that the Christian consciousness was by purely human motives obliged to define its community as due to the work of the Master who once walked the earth.

It is not surprising, then, that the Fourth Gospel, wherein the Pauline conception of the Church as the body of Christ, and of Christ as the spirit of the Church, is perfectly united with the idea of the divine Word made flesh, is, of all the Gospels, the one which, although much the farthest from the literal history of the human Master's earthly words and deeds, has been, in its wholeness, the nearest to the heart of the Christian world during many centuries.

The Synoptic Gospels stir the spirits of men by the single word or saying of Jesus, by

the recorded parable, or by the impressive incident, be this incident a legend, or a fragment of literally true portrayal (we often know not which).

But the Fourth Gospel impresses us most in its wholeness. This Gospel faces the central practical problem of Christianity, — the problem of grace, the transformation of the very essence of the individual man. This transformation is to save him by making him a dweller in the realm which is at once inaccessible above his merely natural level as an individual, and yet daily near to whatever gives to his otherwise ruined natural existence its entire value. This realm is the realm of the level of the united and lovable community.

From this realm comes all saving grace. Wherever two or three are gathered together in a genuine unity of spirit, — this realm does indeed begin to display itself. Other religions besides Christianity have illustrated that fact. And whatever, apart from legend on the one hand, and speculative interpreta-

tion on the other, we human beings can appreciate, in a vital sense, concerning the meaning of what we call divine, we learn through such love for communities as arises from the companionships of those who are thus joined.

This truth humanity at large has long since possessed in countless expressions and disguises. But the fortune of Christianity led the Church to owe its foundation to teachings, to events, to visions, and, above all, to a practical devotion, which, from the first, required the faithful to identify a human individual with the saving spirit of a community, and with the spirit of a community which was also conceived as wholly divine.

The union of the concrete and the ineffable which hereupon resulted, — the union of what touches the human heart and stirs the soul as only the voice of a living individual leader can touch it, — the complete union of this with the greatest and most inspiring of human mysteries, — the mystery of loving membership in a community whose meaning seems

divine, — this union became the central interest of Christianity.

Apart from what is specifically Christian in belief, such union of the two levels has its place in our daily lives wherever the loyalty of an individual leader shows to other men the way that leads them to the realm of the spirit. And whenever that union takes place, the divine and the human seem to come into touch with each other as elsewhere they never do.

The mystery of loyalty, as Paul well knew, is the typical mystery of grace. It is, in another guise, the mystery of the incarnation. According to the mind of the early Christian Church, one individual had solved that mystery for all men.

He had risen from the shameful death that, for Christianity, as for its greatest rival Buddhism, is not only the inevitable but the just doom of whoever is born on the natural level of the human individual; — he had ascended to the level of the Spirit, and had become, in the belief of the faithful, the spirit of a com-

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munity whose boundaries were coextensive with the world, and of whose dominion there was to be no end.

The Fourth Gospel conceives this union of the two levels of spiritual existence with a perfect mastery at once of the exalted poetry and of the definitely practical concreteness of the idea, and of the experiences which make it known to us. That the conception of the Logos — a philosophical conception of Greek origin — is used as the vehicle of the portrayal is, for our present purpose, a fact of subordinate importance.

What is most significant is the direct and vital grasp of the new problem, as it appears in the Fourth Gospel. The spirit of the infant Church is here expressed with such unity and such pathos that all the complications of the new ideas vanish; and one sees only the symbol of the perfectly literal and perfectly human triumph of the Spirit, — a triumph which can appear only in this form of the uniting of the level of individuality with the level of perfect loyalty.



In the tale here presented, the dust of our natural divisions is stirred into new life. From the tomb of individual banishment into which the divine has freely descended, from the wreck to which every human individual is justly doomed, the Word made flesh arises.

But "Who is this King of Glory?" He is, in this portrayal, the one who says: "I am the vine. Ye are the branches." The Spirit of the community speaks. The Pauline metaphor appears in a new expression. But it is uttered not by the believer, but by the being who has solved the mystery of the union of the self and the community. He speaks to individuals who have not yet reached that union. He comforts them:—

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you." This is the voice of the saving community to the troubled soul of the lonely individual.

"Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful. Ye have heard how I said to you, I go away, and I come to you."



“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me.”

“These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: The hour cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but shall tell you plainly of the Father.” “In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”

The loyal alone know whose world this is, and for whom. In the prayer with which this farewell closes, the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel prays: “Holy Father, keep them in thy name which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.”

These are explicitly the words of the spirit of the universal community, whom mortal eyes no longer see, and whom, in a lonely world of tribulation, men who are doomed to die now miss with grief and expect with longing. But: “Hast thou been so long with me, and hast not known me?”

In such words the Fourth Gospel embodies

the living spirit of the lovable community. This is what the loyal soul knows.

That is why I venture to say in my own words (though I am neither apologist, nor Christian preacher, nor theologian), that Christianity is a religion not only of love, but also of loyalty. And that is why the Fourth Gospel tells us the essential ideas both of Christianity, and of the Christian Realm of Grace, more fully than do the parables, unless you choose to read the parables as the voice of the Spirit of the Church.

In all this I have meant to say, and have said, nothing whatever about the truth, or about the metaphysical bases of Christian dogma.

I have been characterizing the human motives that lie at the basis of the doctrine of the realm of grace, and have been pointing out the ethical and religious value of these motives.



V

TIME AND GUILT



## LECTURE V

### TIME AND GUILT

**I**N Matthew Arnold's essay on "St. Paul and Protestantism," there is a well-known passage from which I may quote a few words to serve as a text for the present lecture. These words express what many would call a typical modern view of an ancient problem.

#### I

In this essay, just before the words which I shall quote, Matthew Arnold has been speaking of the relation between Paul's moral experiences and their religious interpretation, as the Apostle formulates it in the epistle to the Romans. Referring to a somewhat earlier stage of his own argument, Arnold here says: "We left Paul in collision with a fact of human nature, but in itself a sterile fact, a fact upon which it is possible to dwell too long, although Puritanism, thinking this impossible, has remained intensely absorbed



in the contemplation of it, and indeed has never properly got beyond it, — the sense of sin.” “Sin,” continues Matthew Arnold, “is not a monster to be mused on, but an impotence to be got rid of. All thinking about it, beyond what is indispensable for the firm effort to get rid of it, is waste of energy and waste of time. We then enter that element of morbid and subjective brooding, in which so many have perished. This sense of sin, however, it is also possible to have not strongly enough to beget the firm effort to get rid of it; and the Greeks, with all their great gifts, had this sense not strongly enough; its strength in the Hebrew people is one of this people’s mainsprings. And no Hebrew prophet or psalmist felt what sin was more powerfully than Paul.” In the sequel, Arnold shows how Paul’s experience of the spiritual influence of Jesus enabled the Apostle to solve his own problem of sin without falling into that dangerous brooding which Arnold attributes to the typical Puritan spirit. As a result, Arnold identifies his own view of sin

with that of Paul and counsels us to judge the whole matter in the same way.

We have here nothing to do with the correctness of Matthew Arnold's criticism of Protestantism; and also nothing to say, at the present moment, about the adequacy of Arnold's interpretation, either of Paul or of Jesus. But we are concerned with that characteristically modern view of the problem of sin which Arnold so clearly states in the words just quoted.

What constitutes the moral burden of the individual man, — what holds him back from salvation, — may be described in terms of his natural heritage, — his inborn defect of character, — or in terms of his training, — or, finally, in terms of whatever he has voluntarily done which has been knowingly unrighteous. In the present lecture I am not intending to deal with man's original defects of moral nature, nor yet with the faults which his training, through its social vicissitudes, may have bred in him. I am to consider that which we call, in the stricter sense, sin.

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Whether correctly or incorrectly, a man often views certain of his deeds as in some specially intimate sense his own, and may also believe that, amongst these his own deeds, some have been wilfully counter to what he believes to be right. Such wrongful deeds a man may regard as his own sins. He may decline to plead ignorance, or bad training, or uncontrollable defect of temper, or overwhelming temptation, as the ground and excuse for just these deeds. Before the forum of his own conscience he may say: "That deed was the result of my own moral choice, and was my sin." For the time being I shall not presuppose, for the purposes of this argument, any philosophical theory about free will. I shall not, in this lecture, assert that, as a fact, there is any genuinely free will whatever. At the moment, I shall provisionally accept only so much of the verdict of common sense as any man accepts when he says: "That was my own voluntary deed, and was knowingly and wilfully sinful." Hereupon I shall ask: Is Matthew Arnold's opinion

correct with regard to the way in which the fact and the sense of sin ought to be viewed by a man who believes that he has, by what he calls his own "free act and deed," sinned? Is Arnold's opinion sound and adequate when he says: "Sin is not a monster to be mused on, but an impotence to be got rid of." Arnold praises Paul for having taken sin seriously enough to get rid of it, but also praises him for not having brooded over sin except to the degree that was "indispensable to the effort to get rid of it." Excessive brooding over sin is, in Arnold's opinion, an evil characteristic of Puritanism. Is Arnold right?

## II

Most of us will readily agree that Arnold's words have a ring of sound modern sense when we first hear them spoken. Brooding over one's sins certainly appears to be not always, — yes, not frequently, — and surely not for most modern men, a convenient spiritual exercise. It tends not to the edification, either of the one who broods, or of his

brethren. Brooding sinners are neither agreeable companions nor inspiring guides. Arnold is quite right in pointing out that Paul's greatest and most eloquent passages — those amongst his words which we best remember and love — are full of the sense of having somehow "got rid" of the very sin to which Paul most freely confesses when he speaks of his own past as a persecutor of the Church and as an unconverted Pharisee. It is, then, the escape from sin, and not the bondage to sin, which helps a man to help his fellows. Ought not, therefore, the thought of sin to be used only under the strict and, so to speak, artistic restraints to which Matthew Arnold advises us to keep it subject? You have fallen into a fault; you have given over your will to the enemy; you have wronged your fellow; or, as you believe, you have offended God in word and deed. What are you now to do about this fact? "Get rid of your sin," says Matthew Arnold. Paul did so. He did so through what he called a loving union with the spirit of Christ. As he expressed the mat-

ter, he "died" to sin. He "lived" henceforth to the righteousness of his Master and of the Christian community. And that was, for him, the end of brooding, unless you call it brooding when his task as missionary required him to repeat the simple confession of his earlier life, — the life that he had lived before the vision of the risen Christ transformed him. Matthew Arnold counsels a repetition of Paul's experience in modern fashion, and with the use of modern ideas rather than of whatever was narrow, and of whatever is now superseded, in Paul's religious opinions and imagery.

The modern version of Paulinism, as set forth by Arnold, would involve, first, a return to the primitive Christianity of the sayings of Jesus; next, a "falling in love" with the person and character of Jesus; and, finally, a "getting rid of sin" through a new life of love, lived in the spirit of Jesus. Matthew Arnold's version of the Gospel is, at the present moment, more familiar to general readers of the literature of the problem of Christianity



than it was when he wrote his essays on religion. So far as sin is concerned, is not this version heartily acceptable to the modern mind? Is it not sensible, simple, and in spirit strictly normal, as well as moral and religious? Does it not dispose, once for all, both of the religious and of the practical aspect of the problem of sin?

I cannot better state the task of this lecture than by taking the opportunity which Arnold's clearness of speech gives me to begin the study of our question in the light of so favorite a modern opinion.

### III

It would not be useful for us to consider any further, in this place, Paul's own actual doctrine about such sin as an individual thinks to have been due to his own voluntary and personal deed. Paul's view regarding the nature of original sin involves other questions than the one which is at present before us. We speak here not of original sin, but of knowing and voluntary evil doing. Paul's idea of



salvation from original sin through grace, and through loving union with the spirit of the Master, is inseparable from his special opinions regarding the Church as the body of Christ, and regarding the supernatural existence of the risen Christ as the Spirit of the Church. These matters also are not now before us. The same may be said of Paul's views concerning the forgiveness of our voluntary sins. For, in Paul's mind, the whole doctrine of the sins which the individual has knowingly and wilfully committed, is further complicated by the Apostle's teachings about predestination. And for an inquiry into those teachings there is, in this lecture, neither space nor motive. Manifold and impressive though Paul's dealings with the problem of sin are, we shall therefore do well, upon this occasion, to approach the doctrine of the voluntary sins of the individual from another side than the one which Paul most emphasizes. Let us turn to aspects of the Christian tradition about wilful sin for which Paul is not mainly responsible.

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We all know, in any case, that Arnold's own views about the sense and the thought of sin are not the views which have been prevalent in the past history of Christianity. And Arnold's hostility to the Puritan spirit carries him too far when he seems to attribute to Puritanism the principal responsibility for having made the fact and the sense of sin so prominent as it has been in Christian thought. Long before Puritanism, mediæval Christianity had its own meditations concerning sin. Others than Puritans have brooded too much over their sins. And not all Puritans have cultivated the thought of sin with a morbid intensity.

I have no space for a history of the Christian doctrine of wilful sin. But, by way of preparation for my principal argument, I shall next call to mind a few of the more familiar Christian beliefs concerning the perils and the results of voluntary sin, without caring, at the moment, whether these beliefs are mediæval, or Puritan, or not. Thereafter, I shall try to translate the sense of these traditional beliefs

into terms which seem to me to be worthy of the serious consideration of the modern man. After this restatement and interpretation of the Christian doctrine, — not of original sin, but of the voluntary sin of the individual, — we shall have new means of seeing whether Arnold is justified in declaring that no thought about sin is wise except such thought as is indispensable for arousing the effort “to get rid of sin.”

#### IV

The teaching of Jesus concerning wilful sin, as it is recorded in some of the best known of his sayings, is simple and searching, august in the severity of the tests which it uses for distinguishing sinful deeds from righteous deeds, and yet radiant with its familiar message of hope for the sincerely repentant sinner. I have no right to judge as to the authenticity of the individual sayings of Jesus which our Gospels record. But the body of the teachings of the Master concerning sin is not only one of the most frequently quoted

portions of the Gospel tradition, but is also an essential part of that doctrine of Christian love which great numbers of Christian souls, both learned and unlearned, find to be the most obviously characteristic expression of what the founder had at heart when he came to seek and to save that which was lost. Searching is this teaching about sin, because of what Matthew Arnold called the *inwardness* of the spirit which Jesus everywhere emphasized in telling us what is the essence of righteousness. August is this teaching in the severity of the tests which it applies; because all seeming, all worldly repute, all outward conformity to rules, avail nothing in the eyes of the Master, unless the interior life of the doer of good works is such as fully meets the requirements of love, both towards God and towards man.

Countless efforts have been made to sum up in a few words the spirit of the ethical teaching of Jesus. I make no new effort, I contribute no novel word or insight, when I now venture to say, simply in passing, that

the religion of the founder, as preserved in the sayings, is a religion of Whole-Heartedness. The voluntary good deed is one which, whatever its outward expression may be, carries with it the whole heart of love, both to God and to the neighbor. The special act — whether it be giving the cup of cold water, or whether it be the martyr's heroism in confessing the name of Jesus in presence of the persecutor — matters less than the inward spirit. The Master gives no elaborate code to be applied to each new situation. The whole heart devoted to the cause of the Kingdom of Heaven, — this is what is needed.

On the other hand, whatever wilful deed does not spring from love of God and man, and especially whatever deed breaks with the instinctive dictates of whole-hearted love, is sin. And sin means alienation from the Kingdom and from the Father; and hence, in the end, means destruction. Here again the august severity of the teaching is fully manifested. But from this destruction there is indeed an escape. It is the escape by the

road of repentance. That is the only road which is emphatically and repeatedly insisted upon in the sayings of Jesus, as we have them. But this repentance must include a whole-hearted willingness to forgive those who trespass against us. Thus repentance means a return both to the Father and to the whole-hearted life of love. Another name for this whole-heartedness, in action as well as in repentance, is faith. For the true lover of God instinctively believes the word of the Son of Man who teaches these things, and is sure that the Kingdom of God will come.

But like the rest of the reported sayings of Jesus, this simple and august doctrine of the peril of sin, and of the way of escape through repentance, comes to us with many indications that some further and fuller revelation of its meaning is yet to follow. Jesus appears in the Gospel reports as himself formally announcing to individuals that their sins are forgiven. The escape from sin is therefore not always wholly due to the repentant sinner's own initiative. Assistance is needed. And



Jesus appears in the records, as assisting. He assists, not only as the teacher who announces the Kingdom, but as the one who has "power to forgive sins." Here again I simply follow the well-known records. I am no judge as to what sayings are authentic.

I am sure, however, that it was but an inevitable development of the original teaching of the founder and of these early reports about his authority to forgive, when the Christian community later conceived that salvation from personal and voluntary sin had become possible through the work which the departed Lord had done while on earth. *How* Christ saved from sin became hereupon a problem. But *that* he saved from sin, and that he somehow did so through what he won for men by his death, became a central constituent of the later Christian tradition.

A corollary of this central teaching was a further opinion which tradition also emphasized, and, for centuries, emphasized the more, the further the apostolic age receded into the past. This further opinion was: That the



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wilful sinner is powerless to return to a whole-hearted union with God through any deed of his own. He could not "get rid of sin," either by means of repentance or otherwise, unless the work of Christ had prepared the way. This, in sum, was long the common tradition of the Christian world. How the saving work of Christ became or could be made efficacious for obtaining the forgiveness of the wilful sin of an individual, — this question, as we well know, received momentous and conflicting answers as the Christian church grew, differentiated, and went through its various experiences of heresy, of schism, and of the learned interpretation of its faith. Here, again, the details of the history of dogma, and the practice of the Church and of its sects in dealing with the forgiveness of sins, concern us not at all.

We need, however, to remind ourselves, at this point, of one further aspect of the tradition about wilful sin. That sin, if unforgiven, leads to "death," was a thought which Judaism had inherited from the reli-

gion of the prophets of Israel. It was a grave thought, essential to the ethical development of the faith of Israel, and capable of vast development in the light both of experience and of imagination.

Because of the later growth of the doctrine of the future life, the word "death" came to mean, for the Christian mind, what it could not yet have meant for the early prophets of Israel. And, in consequence, Christian tradition gradually developed a teaching that the divinely ordained penalty of unforgiven sin—the doom of the wilful sinner—is a "second death," an essentially endless penalty. The Apocalypse imaginatively pictures this doom. When the Church came to define its faith as to the future life, it developed a well-known group of opinions concerning this endless penalty of sin. In its outlines this group of opinions is familiar even to all children who have learned anything of the faith of the fathers.

An essentially analogous group of opinions is found in various religions that are not

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Christian. In its origin this group of opinions goes back to the very beginnings of those forms of ethical religion whose history is at all closely parallel to the history of Judaism or of Christianity. The motives which are here in question lie deeply rooted in human nature; but I have no right and no time to attempt to analyze them now. It is enough for my purpose to remind you that the idea of the endless penalty of unforgiven sin is by no means peculiar to Puritanism; and that it is certainly an idea which, for those who accept it with any hearty faith, very easily leads to many thoughts about sin which tend to exceed the strictly artistic measure which Matthew Arnold assigns as the only fitting one for all such thoughts.

To think of a supposed "endless penalty" as a certain doom for all unforgiven sin, may not lead to morbid brooding. For the man who begins such thoughts may be sedately sure that he is no sinner. Or again, although he confesses himself a sinner, he may be pleasantly convinced that forgiveness is readily

and surely attainable, at least for himself. And, as we shall soon see, there are still other reasons why no morbid thought need be connected with the idea of endless penalty. But no doubt such a doctrine of endless penalty tends to awaken thoughts which have a less modern seeming, and which involve a less sure confidence in one's personal power to "get rid of sin" than Matthew Arnold's words, as we have cited them, convey. If, without any attempt to dwell further, either upon the history or the complications of the traditional Christian doctrine of the wilful sin of the individual, we reduce that doctrine to its simplest terms, it consists of two theses, both of which have had a vast and tragic influence upon the fortunes of Christian civilization. The theses are these: First: "By no deed of his own, unaided by the supernatural consequences of the work of Christ, can the wilful sinner win forgiveness." Second: "The penalty of unforgiven sin is the endless second death."

## V

The contrast between these two traditional theses and the modern spirit seems manifest enough, even if we do not make use of Matthew Arnold's definition of the reasonable attitude towards sin. This contrast of the old faith and the modern view is one of the most frequently emphasized means of challenging the ethical significance of the Christian tradition.

It is indeed difficult to define just who the "modern man" is, and what views he has to hold in order to be modern. But very many people, I suppose, would be disposed to accept as a partial definition of the modern man, this formulation: "The modern man is one who does not believe in hell, and who is too busy to think about his own sins." If this definition is indeed too trivial to be just, it would still seem to many serious people that, at this point, if at no other, the modern man has parted company with Christian tradition.

And the parting would appear to be not accidental, nor yet due to superficial motives. The deepest ethical interests would be at stake, if the appearances here represent the facts as they are. For the old faith held that the very essence of its revelation concerning righteousness was bound up with its conception of the consequences of unforgiven sin. On the other hand, if the education of the human race has taught us any coherent lesson, it has taught us to respect the right of a rational being to be judged by moral standards that he himself can see to be reasonable.

Hence the moral dignity of the modern idea of man seems to depend upon declining to regard as just and righteous any penalty which is supposed to be inflicted by the merely arbitrary will of any supernatural power. The just penalty of sin, to the modern mind, must therefore be the penalty, whatever it is, which the enlightened sinner, if fully awake to the nature of his deed, and rational in his estimate of his deed, would voluntarily inflict upon himself. And how can one better ex-



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press that penalty than by following the spirit of Matthew Arnold's advice: "Get rid of your sin"? This advice, to be sure, has its own deliberate sternness. For "the firm effort to get rid of sin" may involve long labor and deep grief. But "endless penalty," a "second death," — what ethically tolerable meaning can a modern mind attach to these words?

Is not, then, the chasm between the modern ethical view and the ancient faith at this point simply impassable? Have the two not parted company altogether, both in letter and, still more, in their inmost spirit?

To this question some representatives of modern liberal Christianity would at once reply that, as I have already pointed out, the early Gospel tradition does not attribute to Jesus himself the more hopeless aspects of the doctrine of sin, as the later tradition was led to define them. Jesus, according to the reports of his teaching in the Gospels, does indeed more than once use a doctrine of the endless penalty of unforgiven sin, — a doc-



trine with which a portion of the Judaism of his day was more or less familiar. In well-known parables he speaks of the torments of another world. And in general he deals with wilful sin unsparingly. But, so far as the present life is concerned, he seems to leave the door of repentance always open. The Father waits for the Prodigal Son's return. And the Prodigal Son returns of his own will. We hear nothing in the parables about his being unable effectively to repent unless some supernatural plan of salvation has first been worked out for him. Is it not possible, then, to reconcile the Christian spirit and the modern man by simply returning to the Christianity of the parables? So, in our day, many assert.

I do not believe that the parables, in the form in which we possess them, present to us any complete view of the essence of the Christian doctrine of sin, or of the sinner's way of escape. I do not believe that they were intended by the Master to do so. I have already pointed out how our reports of the

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founder's teachings about sin indicate that these teachings were intended to receive a further interpretation and supplement. Our real problem is whether the interpretation and supplement which later Christian tradition gave, through its doctrine of sin, and of the endless penalty of sin, was, despite its tragedy, its mythical setting, and its arbitrariness, a teaching whose ethical spirit we can still accept or, at least, understand. Is the later teaching, in any sense, a just development of the underlying meaning of the parables? Does any deeper idea inform the traditional doctrine that the wilful sinner is powerless to save himself from a just and endless penalty through any repentance, or through any new deed of his own?

As I undertake to answer these questions, let me ask you to bear in mind one general historical consideration. Christianity, even in its most imaginative and in its most tragic teachings, has always been under the influence of very profound ethical motives, — the motives which already inspired the prophets

of Israel. The founder's doctrine of the Kingdom, as we now possess that doctrine, was an outline of an ethical religion. It was also a prologue to a religion that was yet to be more fully revealed, or at least explained. This, as I suppose, was the founder's personal intention. When the early Church sought to express its own spirit, it was never knowingly false; it was often most fluently, yet faithfully, true to the deeper meaning of the founder. Its expressions were borrowed from many sources. Its imagination was constructive of many novelties. Only its deeper spirit was marvellously steadfast. Even when, in its darker moods, its imagination dwelt upon the problem of sin, it saw far more than it was able to express in acceptable formulas. Its imagery was often of local, or of heathen, or even of primitive origin. But the truth which the imagery rendered edifying and teachable, — this often bears and invites an interpretation whose message is neither local nor primitive. Such an interpretation I believe to be possible in case of the doc-

trine of sin and of its penalty; and to my own interpretation I must now ask your attention.

## VI

There is one not infrequent thought about sin upon which Matthew Arnold's rule would surely permit us to dwell; for it is a thought which helps us, if not wholly "to get rid of sin," still, in advance of decisive action, to forestall some temptations to sin which we might otherwise find too insistent for our safety. It is the thought which many a man expresses when he says, of some imagined act: "If I were to do that, I should be false to all that I hold most dear; I should throw away my honor; I should violate the fidelity that is to me the very essence of my moral interest in my existence." The thought thus expressed may be sometimes merely conventional; but it may also be very earnest and heartfelt.

Every man who has a moral code which he accepts, not merely as the customary and, to him, opaque or senseless verdict of his

tribe or of his caste, but as his own chosen personal ideal of life, has his power to formulate what for him would seem (to borrow the religious phraseology) his "sin against the Holy Ghost," — his own morally "impossible" choice, so far as he can now predetermine what he really means to do.

Different men, no doubt, have different exemplary sins in mind when they use such words. Their various codes may be expressions of quite different and largely accidental social traditions; their diverse examples of what, for each of them, would be his own instance of the unpardonable sin, may be the outcome of the *tabus* of whatever social order you please. I care for the moment not at all for the objective ethical correctness of any one man's definition of his own moral code. And I am certainly here formulating no ethical code of my own. I am simply pointing out that, when a man becomes conscious of his own rule of life, of his own ideal of what makes his voluntary life worth while, he tends to arrange his ideas of right and wrong acts

so that, for him at least, *some* acts, when he contemplates the bare possibility of doing them himself, appear to him to be acts such that they would involve for him a kind of moral suicide, — a deliberate wrecking of what makes life, for himself, morally worth while.

One common-sense way of expressing such an individual judgment upon these extreme acts of wrong-doing, is to say: “If I were to do that of my own free will, I could thereafter never forgive myself.”

Since I am here not undertaking any critical discussion of the idea of the “Ought,” I do not now venture the thesis that every man who is a reasonable being at all, or who, as they say, “has a conscience,” must needs be able to name instances of acts which, if he knowingly chose to do them, would make his life, in his own eyes, a moral chaos, — a failure, — so that he would “never forgive” himself for those acts. If a student of ethics asks me to prove that a man ought to view his own life and his own will in this way, I am



not here concerned to offer such a proof in philosophical terms.

But this I can point out: In case a man thinks of his own possible actions in this way, he need not be morbidly brooding over sins of which it is well not to think too much. He *may* be simply surveying his plan of life in a resolute way, and deciding, as well as he can, where he stands; what his leading ideas are, and what makes his voluntary life, from his own point of view, worth living. To be resolute, is at all events no weakness; and nobody "perishes" merely because he has his mind clearly made up regarding what, for him, would be his own unpardonable sin. There is no loss for one's manhood in knowing how one's "sin against the Holy Ghost," one's possible act for which one is resolved never to ask one's own forgiveness, is defined. Such thoughts tend to clear our moral air, if only we think them in terms of our own personal ideals, and do not, as is too often the case, apply them solely to render more dramatic our judgments about our neighbors.



## VII

In order to be able to formulate such thoughts, one must have an "ideal," even if one cannot state it in an abstract form. One must think of one's voluntary life in terms of fidelity to some such "ideal," or set of ideals. One must regard one's self as a creature with a purpose in living. One must have what they call a "mission" in one's own world. And so, whether one uses philosophical theories or religious beliefs, or does not use them, one must, when one speaks thus, actually have some sort of spiritual realm in which, as one believes, one's moral life is lived, a realm to whose *total* order, as one supposes, one could be false if one chose. One's mission, one's business, must ideally extend, in some fashion, to the very boundaries of this spiritual realm, so that, if one actually chose to commit one's supposed unpardonable sin, one could exist in this entire realm only as, in some sense and degree, an outcast, — estranged, so far as that one un-

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pardonable fault estranged one, from one's own chosen moral hearth and fireside. At least this is how one resolves, in advance of decisive action, to view the matter, in case one has the precious privilege of being able to make such resolves. And I say that so to find one's self resolving, is to find *not* weakness and brooding, but resoluteness and clearness. Life seems simply blurred and dim if one can nowhere find in it such sharp moral outlines. And if one becomes conscious of such sharp outlines, one is not saying: "Behold me, the infallible judge of moral values for all mankind. Behold me with the absolute moral code precisely worked out." For one is so far making no laws for one's neighbors. One is accepting no merely traditional *tabus*. One is simply making up one's mind so as to give a more coherent sense to one's choices. The penalty of *not* being able to make such resolves regarding what would be one's own unpardonable sin, is simply the penalty of flabbiness and irresoluteness. To remain unaware of what we propose to do, never helps

us to live. To be aware of our coherent plan, to have a moral world and a business that, in ideal, extends to the very boundaries of this world, and to view one's life, or any part of it, as an expression of one's own personal will, is to assert one's genuine freedom, and is not to accept any external bondage. But it is also to bind one's self, in all the clearness of a calm resolve. It is to view certain at least abstractly possible deeds as moral catastrophes, as creators of chaos, as deeds whereby the self, *if* it chose them, would, at least in so far, banish itself from its own country.

To be able to view life in this way, to resolve thus deliberately what genuine and thorough-going sin would mean for one's own vision, requires a certain maturity. Not all ordinary misdeeds are in question when one thinks of the unpardonable sin. Blunders of all sorts fill one's childhood and youth. What Paul conceived as our original sin may have expressed itself for years in deeds that our social order condemns, and that our later life deeply deplores. And yet, in all this

maze of past evil-doing and of folly, we may have been, so far, either helpless victims of our nature and of our training, or blind followers of false gods. What Paul calls sin may have "abounded." And yet, as we look back, we may now judge that all this was merely a means whereby, henceforth, "grace may more abound." We may have learned to say, — it may be wise, and even our actual duty to say: "I will not brood over these which were either my ignorant or my helpless sins. I will henceforth firmly and simply resolve 'to get rid of them.' That is for me the best. By-gones are by-gones. Remorse is a waste of time. These 'confusions of a wasted youth' must be henceforth simply ignored. That is the way of cheer. It is also the way of true righteousness. I can live wisely only in case I forget my former follies, except in so far as a memory of these follies helps me not to repeat them."

One may only the more insist upon this cheering doctrine of Lethe and forgiveness

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for the past, and of "grace abounding" for the future, when there come into one's life those happenings which Paul viewed as a new birth, and as a "dying to sin." These workings of "grace," if they occur to us, may transform our "old man" of inherited defect, of social waywardness, of contentiousness, and of narrow hatred for our neighbors and for "the law" into the "new life." It is a new life to us because we now seem to have found our own cause, and have learned to love our sense of intimate companionship with the universe. Now, for the first time, we have found a life that seems to us to have transparent sense, unity of aim, and an abiding and sustaining inspiration about it.

If this result has taken place, then, whatever our cause, or our moral opinions, or our religion may be, we shall tend to rejoice with Paul that we have now "died" to the old life of ignorance and of evil-working distractions. Hereupon we may be ready to say, with him, and joyously: "There is no condemnation" for us who are ready to walk after what we

now take to be "the spirit." The past is dead. Grace has saved us. Forgiveness covers the evil deeds that were done. For those deeds, as we now see, were *not* done by our awakened selves. They were not our own "free acts" at all. They were the workings of what Paul called "the flesh." "Grace" has blotted them out.

I am still speaking not of any one faith about the grace that saves, or about the ideal of life. Let a man find his salvation as it may happen to him to find it. But the main point that I have further to insist upon is this: Whenever and however we have become morally mature enough to get life all colored through and through by what seems to us a genuinely illuminating moral faith, so that it seems to us as if, in every deed, we could serve, despite our weakness, our one highest cause, and be faithful to all our moral world at every moment, — then this inspiration has to be paid for. The abundance of grace means, henceforth, a new gravity of life.



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For we now have to face the further fact that, if we have thus won vast ideals, and a will that is now inspired to serve them, we can imagine ourselves becoming false to this our own will, to this which gives our life its genuine value. We can imagine ourselves breaking faith with our own world-wide cause and inspiration. One who has found his cause, if he has a will of his own, can become a conscious and deliberate traitor. One who has found his loyalty is indeed, at first, under the obsession of the new spirit of grace. But if, henceforth, he lives with a will of his own, he can, by a wilful closing of his eyes to the light, *become* disloyal.

Our actual voluntary life does not bear out any theory as to the fatally predestined perseverance of the saints. For our voluntary life seems to us as if it was free either to persevere or not to persevere. The more precious the light that has seemed to come to me, the deeper is the disgrace to which, in my own eyes, I can condemn myself, if I voluntarily become false to this light.

Now it is indeed not well to brood over such chances of falsity. But it is manly to face the fact that they are present.

I repeat that, in all this statement, I have presupposed no philosophical theory of free will, and have not assumed the truth of any one ethical code or doctrine. I have been speaking simply in terms of moral experience, and have been pointing out how the world seems to a man who reaches sufficient moral maturity to possess, even if but for a season, a pervasive and practically coherent ideal of life, and to value himself as a possible servant of his cause, but a servant whose freedom to choose is still his own.

What I point out is that, if a man has won practically a free and conscious view of what his honor requires of him, the reverse side of this view is also present. This reverse side takes the form of knowing what, for this man himself, it would mean to be wilfully false to his honor. One who knows that he freely serves his cause knows that he could, if he chose, become a traitor. And if indeed he

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freely serves his cause, he knows whether or no he could forgive himself if he wilfully became a traitor. Whoever, through grace, has found the beloved of his life, and now freely lives the life of love, knows that he could, if he chose, betray his beloved. And he knows what estimate his own free choice now requires him to put upon such betrayal.

Choose your cause, your beloved, and your moral ideal as you please. What I now point out is that so to choose is to imply your power to define what, for you, would be the unpardonable sin if you committed it. This unpardonable sin would be betrayal.

### VIII

So far I have spoken of the moral possibility of treason. We seem to be free. Therefore it seems to us as if treason were possible. But now, *do* any of us ever actually thus betray our own chosen cause? Do we ever actually turn traitor to our own flag, — to the flag that we have sworn to serve, — after taking our oath, not as unto men, but as unto

ourselves and our cause? Do any of us ever really commit that which, in our own eyes, is the unpardonable sin?

Here, again, let every one of us judge for himself. And let him also judge rather himself than his neighbor. For we are here speaking, not of customary codes, nor of outward seeming, but of how a man who knows his ideal and knows his own will finds that his inward deed appears to himself.

Still, apart from all evil speaking, the common experience of mankind *seems* to show that such actual and deliberate sin against the light, such conscious and wilful treason, occasionally takes place.

So far as we know of such treason at all, or reasonably believe in its existence, it appears to us to be, on the whole, the worst evil with which man afflicts his fellows and his social order in this distracted world of human doings. The blindness and the naïve cruelty of crude passion, the strife and hatred with which the natural social order is filled, often seem to us mild when we compare

them with the spiritual harm that follows the intentional betrayal of great causes once fully accepted, but then wilfully forsaken, by those to whom they have been intrusted.

“If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.” This is the word which seems especially fitted for the traitor’s own case. For he has seen the great light. The realm of the spirit has been graciously opened to him. He has willingly entered. He has chosen to serve. And then he has closed his eyes; and, by his own free choice, a darkness far worse than that of man’s primal savagery has come upon him. And the social world, the unity of brotherhood, the beloved life which he has betrayed, — how desolate he has left what was fairest in it. He has reduced to its primal chaos the fair order of those who trusted and who lived and loved together in one spirit!

But we are here little concerned with what others think of the traitor, if such traitor there be. We are interested in what (if the light against which he has sinned returns to him),

the traitor henceforth is to think of himself. Matthew Arnold would say, "Let him think of his sin," — that is, in this case, of his treason, — only in so far as is indispensable to the "firm resolve to get rid of it." We ask whether, — now that the traitor has first won his own light, and has defined by his own will his own unpardonable sin, and has then betrayed his cause, has sinned against his light and has done his little best to make chaos of his own chosen ideal and of his moral order, — we ask, I say, whether Arnold's rule seems any longer quite adequate to meet the situation.

Of course I am not venturing to assign to the supposed traitor any penalties *except* those which his own will really intends to assign to him. I am not acting in the least as his Providence. I am leaving him quite free to decide his own fate. I am certainly not counselling him to feel any particular kind or degree of the mere emotion called remorse. For all that I now shall say, he is quite free, if that is his desire, to forget his



treason once for all, and to begin his business afresh with a new moral ideal, or with no ideal at all, as he may choose.

What I ask, however, is simply this: *If* he resumes his former position of knowing and choosing an ideal, if he also remembers what ideal he formerly chose, and what and how and how deliberately he betrayed, and knows himself for what he is, what does he judge regarding the now inevitable and endless consequences of his deed? And what answer will he now make to Matthew Arnold's kind advice:—"Get rid of your sin." He need not answer in a brooding way. He need be no Puritan. He may remain as cheerful in his passing feelings as you please. He may quite calmly rehearse the facts. He may decline to shed any tear, either of repentance or of terror. My only hypothesis is that he sees the facts as they are, and confesses, however coolly and dispassionately, the moral value which, as a matter of simple coherence of view and opinion, he now assigns to himself.

## IX

He will answer Matthew Arnold's advice, as I think, thus: "'Get rid of my sin?' How can I get rid of it? It is done. It is past. It is as irrevocable as the Archæan geological period, or as the collision of stellar masses, the light of whose result we saw here on earth a few years ago, when a new star flamed forth in the Constellation Perseus. I am the one who, at such a time, with such a light of the spirit shining before me, with my eyes thus and thus open to my business and to my moral universe, first, so far as I could freely act at all, freely closed my eyes, and then committed what my own will had already defined to be my unpardonable sin. So far as in me lay, in all my weakness, but yet with all the wit and the strength that just then were mine, I was a traitor.

That fact, that event, that deed, is irrevocable. The fact that I am the one who then did thus and so, not ignorantly, but know-

ingly, — that fact will outlast the ages. That fact is as endless as time.

And, in so far as I continue to value myself as a being whose life is coherent in its meaning, this fact that then and there I was a traitor will always constitute a genuine penalty, — my own penalty, — a penalty that no god assigns to me, but that I, simply because I am myself, and take an interest in knowing myself, assign to myself, precisely in so far as and whenever I am awake to the meaning of my own life. I can never undo that deed. If I ever say, 'I have undone that deed,' I shall be both a fool and a liar. Counsel me, if you will, to forget that deed. Counsel me to do good deeds without number to set over against that treason. Counsel me to be cheerful, and to despise Puritanism. Counsel me to plunge into Lethe. All such counsel may be, in its way and time, good. Only do not counsel me 'to get rid of' just that sin. That, so far as the real facts are concerned, cannot be done. For I am, and to the end of endless time shall remain, the doer of that

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wilfully traitorous deed. Whatever other value I may get, that value I retain forever. My guilt is as enduring as time."

But hereupon a bystander will naturally invite our supposed traitor to repent, and to repent thoroughly of his treason. The traitor, now cool and reasonable once more, can only apply to his own case Fitzgerald's word in the Omar Khayyam stanzas:—

The moving finger writes, and having writ,  
Moves on: nor all your piety nor wit  
Can lure it back to cancel half a line,  
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

These very familiar lines were sometime viewed as Oriental fatalism. But they are, in fact, fully applicable to the freest of deeds when once that deed is done.

We need not further pursue any supposed colloquy between the traitor and those who comment upon the situation. The simple fact is that each deed is *ipso facto* irrevocable; that our hypothetical traitor, in his own deed, has been false to whatever light he then and there had and to whatever ideal he then

viewed as his highest good. Hereupon no new deed, however good or however faithful, and however much of worthy consequences it introduces into the future life of the traitor or of his world, can annul the fact that the one traitorous deed was actually done. No question as to whether the traitor, when he first chose the cause which he later betrayed, was then ethically correct in his choice, aids us to estimate just the one matter which is here in question, — namely, the value of the traitor as the doer of that one traitorous deed. For his treason consists not in his blunders in the choice of his cause, but in his sinning against such light as he then and there had. The question is, furthermore, not one as to his general moral character, apart from this one act of treason. To condemn at one stroke the whole man for the one deed is, of course, absurd. But it is the one deed which is now in question. This man may *also* be the doer of countless good deeds. But our present question is solely as to his value as the doer of that one trai-

torous deed. This value he has through his own irrevocable choice. Whatever other values his other deeds may give him, this one value remains, never to be removed. By no deed of his own can he ever escape from that penalty which consists in his having introduced into the moral world the one evil which was, at the time, as great an evil as he could then, of his own will, introduce.

In brief, by his own deed of treason, the traitor has consigned himself, — not indeed his *whole* self, but his self as the doer of this deed, — to what one may call the *hell of the irrevocable*. All deeds are indeed irrevocable. But only the traitorous sin against the light is such that, in advance, the traitor's own free acceptance of a cause has stamped it with the character of being what his own will had defined as his own unpardonable sin. Whatever else the traitor may hereafter do, — and even if he becomes and remains, through all his future life, in this or any other world, a saint, — the fact will remain: There was a moment when he freely did whatever he could



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to wreck the cause that he had sworn to serve. The traitor can henceforth do nothing that will give to himself, precisely in so far as he was the doer of that one deed, any character which is essentially different from the one determined by his treason.

The hell of the irrevocable: all of us know what it is to come to the border of it when we contemplate our own past mistakes or mischances. But we can enter it and dwell in it only when the fact "This deed is irrevocable," is combined with the further fact "This deed is one that, unless I call treason my good, and moral suicide my life, I cannot forgive myself for having done."

Now to use these expressions is not to condemn the traitor, or any one else, to endless emotional horrors of remorse, or to any sensuous pangs of penalty or grief, or to any one set of emotions whatever. It is simply to say: If I morally value myself at all, it remains for me a genuine and irrevocable evil in my world, that ever I was, even if for that one moment only and in that one deed, with

all my mind and my soul and my heart and my strength, a traitor. And if I ever had any cause, and then betrayed it, — such an evil not only was my deed, but such an evil forever remains, so far as that one deed was done, the *only* value that I can attribute to myself precisely *as* the doer of that deed at that time.

What the pungency of the odors, what the remorseful griefs, of the hell of the irrevocable may be, for a given individual, we need not attempt to determine, and I have not the least right or desire to imagine. Certainly remorse is a poor companion for an active life; and I do not counsel any one, traitor or not traitor, to cultivate remorse. Our question is not one about one's feelings, but about one's genuine value as a moral agent. Certainly forgetfulness is often useful when one looks forward to new deeds. I do not counsel any one uselessly to dwell upon the past. Still the fact remains, that the more I come to take large and coherent views of my life and of its meaning, the more will the fact

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that, by my own traitorous deed, I have banished myself to the hell of the irrevocable, appear to me both a vast and a grave fact in my world. I shall learn, if I wisely grow into new life, neither to be crushed by any sort of facing of that fact, nor to brood unduly over its everlasting presence as a fact in my life. But so long as I remain awake to the real values of my life, and to the coherence of my meaning, I shall know that while no god shuts me, or could possibly shut me, if he would, into this hell, it is my own will to say that, for this treason, just in so far as I wilfully and knowingly committed this treason, I shall permit none of the gods to forgive me. For it is my precious privilege to assert my own reasonable will, by freely accepting my place in the hell of the irrevocable, and by never forgiving myself for this sin against the light. If any new deed can assign to just that one traitorous deed of mine any essentially novel and reconciling meaning, — that new deed will in any case certainly *not* be mine. I can do good deeds in future; but I cannot

revoke my individual past deed. If it ever comes to appear as anything but what I myself then and there made it, that change will be due to no deed of mine. Nothing that I myself can do will ever really reconcile me to my own deed, so far as it was that treason.

This, then, as I suppose, is the essential meaning which underlies the traditional doctrine of the endless penalty of wilful sin. This deeper meaning is that, quite apart from the judgment of any of the gods, and wholly in accordance with the true rational will of the one who has done the deed of betrayal, the guilt of a free act of betrayal is as enduring as time. This doctrine so interpreted is, I insist, *not* cheerless. It is simply resolute. It is the word of one who is ready to say to himself, "Such was my deed, and I did it." No repentance, no pardoning power can deprive us of the duty and, — as I repeat, — the precious privilege of saying that of our own deed.



VI

ATONEMENT





## LECTURE VI

### ATONEMENT

THE human aspect of the Christian idea of atonement is based upon such motives that, if there were no Christianity and no Christians in the world, the idea of atonement would have to be invented, before the higher levels of our moral existence could be fairly understood. To the illustration of this thesis the present lecture is to be largely devoted. The thesis is not new; yet it seems to me to have been insufficiently emphasized even in recent literature; although, as is well known, modern expositors of the meaning of the Christian doctrine of atonement have laid a constantly increasing stress upon the illustrations and analogies of that doctrine which they have found present in the common experience of mankind, in non-theological literature, and in the history of ethics.

I

The treatment of the idea of atonement in the present lecture, if it in any respect aids towards an understanding of our problem, will depend for whatever it accomplishes upon two deliberate limitations.

The first limitation is the one that I have just indicated. I shall emphasize, more than is customary, aspects of the idea of atonement which one could expound just as readily in a world where the higher levels of moral experience had somehow been reached by the leaders of mankind, but where Christians and Christianity were as yet wholly unknown.

My second limitation will be this: I shall consider the idea of atonement in the light of the special problems which the close of the lecture on "Time and Guilt" left upon our hands. The result will be a view of the idea of atonement which will be intentionally fragmentary, and which will need to be later reviewed in its connection with the other great Christian ideas.

It is true that the history of the Christian doctrine of the atonement has inseparably linked, with the topics that I shall here most emphasize, various religious beliefs, and theological interpretations, with which, under my chosen limitations and despite these limitations, I shall endeavor to keep in touch. But, in a great part of what I shall have to say, I shall confine myself to what I may call "the problem of the traitor," — an ethical problem which, on the basis laid in the foregoing lecture, I now choose arbitrarily as my typical instance of the human need for atonement, and of a sense in which, in purely human terms, we are able to define what an atoning act would be, if it took place, and what it could accomplish, as well as what it could not accomplish.

Our last lecture familiarized us with the conception of the being whom I shall now call, throughout this discussion, "the traitor." We shall soon learn new reasons why our present study will gain, in definiteness of issue and in simplicity, by using the exemplary

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moral situation in which our so-called "traitor" has placed himself, as our means for bringing to light what relief, what possible, although always imperfect, reconciliation of the traitor with his own moral world, and with himself, this situation permits.

Perhaps I can help you to anticipate my further statement of my reasons for dwelling upon the unlovely situation of the hypothetical traitor, if I tell you what association of ideas first conducted me to the choice of the exemplary type of moral tragedy which I shall use as the vehicle whereby we are here to be carried nearer to our proposed view of the idea of atonement.

In Bach's Matthew Passion Music, whose libretto was prepared under the master's own guidance, there is a great passage wherein, at the last supper, Christ has just said: "One of you shall betray me." "And they all begin to say," so the recitative first tells us, although at once passing the words over into the mouths of the chorus, "Is it I? Is it I? Is it I?" And then there begins (with the use

of the recurrent chorale), the chorus of "the Believers": "'Tis I, *My* sins betray thee, who died to make me whole." The effect of this, as well as of other great scenes in the Passion Music, — the dramatic and musical workings in their unity, as Bach devised them, transport the listener to a realm where he no longer hears an old story of the past retold, but, looking down, as it were, upon the whole stream of time, sees the betrayal, the divine tragedy, and the triumph, in one, — not indeed timeless, but time-embracing vision. In this vision all flows and changes and passes from the sorrows of a whole world to the hope of reconciliation. Yet all this fluent and passionate life is one divine life, and is also the listener's, or, as we can also say, the spectator's own life. Judas, the spectator knows as himself, as his own ruined personality; the sorrow of Gethsemane, the elemental and perfectly human passion of the chorus: "Destroy them, destroy them, the murderous brood," — the waiting and weeping at the tomb, — these things belong to the present life of the be-



liever who witnesses the passion. They are all the experiences of us men, just as we are. They are also divine revelations, coming as if from a world that is somehow inclusive of our despair, and that yet knows a joy which, as Bach depicts it in his music drama, is not so much mystical, as simply classic in the perfection of its serene self-control.

What the art of Bach suggests, I have neither the right nor the power to translate into "matter-moulded forms of speech." I have here to tell you only a little about the being whom Mephistopheles calls "der kleine Gott der Welt," about the one who, as the demon says:—

Bleibt stets von gleichem Schlag,  
Und ist so wunderlich, als wie am ersten Tag.

And I am forced to limit myself in this discourse to choosing, — as my exemplary being who feels the need of some form of atonement, — man in his most unlovely and drearily discouraging aspect, — man in his appearance as a betrayer. The justification of this repellent choice can appear, if at all, then only

in the outcome of our argument, and in its later relation to the whole Christian doctrine of life. But you may now see what first suggested my using this choice in this lecture.

So much, however, it is fair to add as I introduce my case. The "traitor" of my discourse shall here be the creature of an ideal definition based upon facts set forth in the last lecture. I shall soon have to speak again of the sense in which all observers of human affairs have a right to say that there are traitors, and that we well know some of their works. But we have in general no right to say with assurance, when we speak of our individual neighbors, that we know who the traitors are. For we are no searchers of hearts. And treason, as I here define it, is an affair of the heart, — that is, of the inner voluntary deed and decision.

While my ideal definition of the traitor of whom we are now to speak thus depends, as you see, upon facts already discussed in our discourse on "Time and Guilt," our new relation to the being defined as a traitor con-

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sists in the fact that, at the last time, we considered the nature of his guilt, while now we mean to approach an understanding of his relation to the idea of atonement.

### II

Two conditions, as you will remember from our last lecture, determine what constitutes, for the purposes of my definition, a traitor. The first condition is that a traitor is a man who has had an ideal, and who has loved it with all his heart and his soul and his mind and his strength. His ideal must have seemed to him to furnish the cause of his life. It must have meant to him what Paul meant by the grace that saves. He must have embraced it, for the time, with full loyalty. It must have been his religion, his way of salvation. It must have been the cause of a Beloved Community.

The second condition that my ideal traitor must satisfy is this. Having thus found his cause, he must, as he now knows, in at least some one voluntary act of his life, have been

deliberately false to his cause. So far as in him lay, he must, at least in that one act, have betrayed his cause.

Such is our ideal traitor. At the close of the last lecture we left him condemned, in his own sight, to what we called the "hell of the irrevocable."

We now, for the moment, still confine ourselves to his case, and ask: Can the idea of atonement mean anything that permits its application, in any sense, however limited, to the situation of this traitor? Can there be any reconciliation, however imperfect, between this traitor and his own moral world, — any reconciliation which, from his own point of view, and for his own consciousness, can make his situation in his moral world essentially different from the situation in which his own deed has so far left him?

In the hell of the irrevocable there may be, as at the last time we pointed out, no sensuous penalties to fear. And there may be, for all that we know, countless future opportunities for the traitor to do good and loyal

deeds. Our problem lies in the fact that none of these deeds will ever undo the supposed deed of treason. In that sense, then, no good deeds of the traitor's future will ever *so* atone for his one act of treason, that he will become clear of just that treason, and of what he finds to be its guilt. He had his moral universe; and his one act of treason did the most that he then and there could do to destroy that world and to wreck his own relation to its meaning. His irrevocable deed is, for his moral consciousness, its own endless penalty. For that deed he can never forgive himself, so long as he knows himself. And nothing that we can now say will change just these aspects of the matter. So much in the traitor's situation is irrevocably fixed.

But it is still open to us to ask whether anything could occur in the traitor's moral world which, without undoing his deed, could still add some new aspect to this deed, — an aspect such that, when the traitor came to view his own deed in this light, he could say: "Something in the nature of a genuinely recon-

ciling element has been added, not only to my world and to my own life, but also to the inmost meaning even of my deed of treason itself. My moral situation has hereby been rendered genuinely better than my deed left it. And this bettering does not consist merely in the fact that some new deed of my own, or of some one else, has been simply a good deed, instead of a bad one, and has thus put a good thing into my world to be henceforth considered side by side with the irrevocable evil deed. No, this bettering consists in something more than this, — in something which gives to my very treason itself a new value; so that I can say, not: ‘It is undone;’ but ‘I am henceforth in some measure, in some genuine fashion, morally reconciled to the fact that I did this evil.’”

Plainly, if any such reconciliation is possible, it will be at best but an imperfect and tragic reconciliation. It cannot be simply and perfectly destructive of guilt. But the great tragic poets have long since taught us that there are indeed tragic reconciliations



even when there are great woes. These tragic reconciliations may be infinitely pathetic; but they may be also infinitely elevating, and even, in some unearthly and wondrous way, triumphant.

Our question is: Can such a tragic reconciliation occur in the case of the traitor? If it can occur, the result would furnish to us an instance of an atonement. This atonement would not mean, and could not mean, a clearing away of the traitor's guilt as if it never had been guilt. It would still remain true that the traitor could never rationally forgive himself for his deed. But he might in some measure, and in some genuine sense, become, not simply, but tragically, — sternly, — yet really, reconciled, not only to himself, but to his deed of treason, and to its meaning in his moral world.

Let us consider, then, in what way, and to what degree, the traitor might find such an atonement.



## III

The Christian idea of atonement has always involved an affirmative answer to the question: Is an atonement for even a wilful deed of betrayal possible? Is a reconciliation of even the traitor to himself and to his world a possibility? The help that our argument gets from employing the supposed traitor's view of his own case as the guide of our search for whatever reconciliation is still possible for him, shows itself, at the present point of our inquiry, by simplifying the issue, and by thus enabling us at once to dispose, very briefly — not indeed of the Christian idea of atonement (for that, as we shall see, will later reveal itself in a new and compelling form), but of a great number of well-known theological theories of the nature of atonement, so far as they are to help our traitor to get a view of his own case.

These theological theories stand at a peculiar disadvantage when they speak to the now fully awakened traitor, when he asks what

measure of reconciliation is still for him possible. Our traitor has his own narrow, but for that very reason, clearly outlined problem of atonement to consider. We here confine ourselves to his view.

Calmly reasonable in his hell of the irrevocable, he is dealing, not with the "angry God" of a well-known theological tradition, but with himself. He asks, not indeed for escape from the irrevocable, but for what relative and imperfect tragic reconciliation with his world and with his past, his moral order can still furnish to him, by any new event or deed or report. Shall we offer him one of the traditional theological comforts and say: "Some one, — namely, a divine being, — Christ himself, has accomplished a full 'penal satisfaction' for your deed of treason. Accept that satisfying sacrifice of Christ, and you shall be reconciled."

The traitor need not pause to repeat any of the now so well-known theological and ethical objections to the "penal satisfaction" theories of atonement. He needs no long dispute to

clear his head. The cold wintry light of his own insight into what was formerly his moral home and into what he has by his own deed lost, is enough to show him the mercilessly unchangeable outlines of his moral landscape. He sees them; and that is so far enough. "Penal satisfaction?" "*That,*" he will say, "may somehow interest the 'angry God' of one or another theologian. If so, let this angry God be content, if he chooses. That does not reconcile me. So far as penalty is concerned:—

'I was my own destroyer and will be my own hereafter.' I asked for reconciliation with my own moral universe, not for the accidental pacification of some angry God. The 'penal satisfaction' offered by another is simply foreign to all the interests in the name of which I inquire."

But hereupon let a grander, — let a far more genuinely religious and indeed truly Christian chord be sounded for the traitor's consolation. Let the words of Paul be heard: "There is now no condemnation for them that

are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." The simply human meaning of those immortal words, if understood quite apart from Paul's own religious beliefs, is far deeper than is any merely technical theological theory of atonement. And our traitor will well know what those words of Paul mean. Their deepest human meaning has long since entered into his life. Had it not so entered, he would be no traitor; for he would never have known that there is what, for his own estimate, has been a Holy Spirit, — a cause to which to devote one's life, — a love that is indeed redeeming, and, when it first comes to us, compelling, — the love that raises, as if from the dead, the man who becomes the lover, — the love that also forces the lover, with its mysterious power, to die to his old natural life of barren contentions, and of distractions, and to live in the spirit. That love, — so the traitor well knows, redeems the lover from all the helpless natural wretchedness of the, as yet, unawakened life. It

frees from "condemnation" all who remain true to this love.

The traitor knows all this by experience. And he knows it not in terms of mere theological formulas. He knows it as a genuinely human experience. He knows it as what every man knows to whom a transforming love has revealed the sense of a new life.

All this is familiar to the traitor. In his own way, he has heard the voice of the Spirit. He has been converted to newness of life. And *therefore* he has known what his own sin against the Holy Ghost meant. And, thereafter, he has deliberately committed that very sin. Therefore Paul's words are at once, to his mind, true in their most human as well as in their most spiritual sense. And just for that very reason they are to him now, in his guilt, as comfortless and as unreconciling as a death knell. For they tell him of precisely *that* life which once was his, and which, so far as his one traitorous deed could lead to such a result, he himself has deliberately slain.

If there is to be any, even the most tragic, reconciliation for the traitor, there must be other words to be heard besides just these words of Paul.

#### IV

Yet there are expositors of the Christian idea of the atonement who have developed the various so-called "moral theories" of the atoning work of Christ. And these men indeed have still many things to tell our traitor. One of the most clearly written and, from a purely literary point of view, one of the most charming of recent books on the moral theory of the idea of atonement, namely, the little book with which Sabatier ended his life work, very effectively contrasts with all the "penal satisfaction" theories of atonement, the doctrine that the work of Christ consisted in such a loving sacrifice for human sin and for human sinners that the contemplation of this work arouses in the sinful mind a depth of saving repentance, as well as of love, — a depth of glowing fervor, such as simply purifies the sinner's soul.



For love and repentance and new life, — these constitute reconciliation. These, for Sabatier, and for many other representatives of the “moral theories” of atonement, — these are in themselves salvation.

I need not dwell upon such opinions in this connection. They are nowadays well known to all who have read any notable portion of the recent literature of the atonement. They are present in this recent literature in almost endless variations. In general these views are deep, and Christian, and cheering, and unquestionably moral. And their authors can and do freely use Paul’s words; and on occasion supplement Paul’s words by a citation of the parables. In the parables there is no definite doctrine of atonement enunciated. But there is a doctrine of salvation through loving repentance. Cannot our traitor, in view of the loving sacrifice that constitutes, according to tradition, Christ’s atoning work, repent and love? Does *that* not reconcile him? May not the love of Christ both constrain and console him?



## V

Once more, speaking still from his own purely human point of view, our traitor sadly simplifies the labor of considering in detail these various moral theories of atonement. The traitor seeks the possible, the relative, the inevitably imperfect reconciliation which, for one in his case, is still rationally definable. He discounts all that you can say as to the transforming pathos and the compelling power of love, and of the sacrifices. All this he long since knows. And, as I must repeat, all this constitutes the very essence of his own tragedy. He knew love before he became a traitor. He knew the love that has inspired heroes, martyrs, prophets, and saviours of mankind. All this he knew. And in his one traitorous deed he thrust it forth. That is the very heart of his problem. Repentance? Yes, — so far as he now has insight, — he has repentance for his traitorous deed. He has this repentance, if not as in the form of passionate remorse, still in the form of an

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irrevocable condemnation of his own deed. He has this repentance as the very breath of what is now his moral existence in the hell of the irrevocable.

As for amendment of life, and good deeds yet to come, he well knows the meaning of all these things. He is ready to do whatever he can. But none of all this doing of good works, none of this repentance, no love, and no tears will "lure back" the "moving finger" to "cancel half a line," or wash out a word of what is written. Once, when the great light first came, and the one who is now the traitor saw what life meant, his repentance — as he then indeed repented — reconciled him with his own life, and did so for precisely the reasons which Paul has explained. But that was his repentance for the former deeds of his folly, for the misadventures and the passions of his helpless natural sinfulness. He then repented, namely, of what he had done before the light came.

But *now* his state is quite other. We know *why* it is other. And we know, too, why the

parables no longer can comfort the traitor. Their words can at most only remind him of what he himself best knows.

“Thou knewest,” says the returning Lord to the traitor-servant in the parable of the talents; “thou knewest that I was a hard master.” And as for our traitor, — so far as his one deed of treason could express his will, — it was the deed of one who not merely hid his talent in a napkin, but betrayed his Lord as Judas betrayed. Therefore if atonement is to mean for the traitor anything that shall be in any sense reconciling, he must hear of it in some new form. He is no mere prodigal son. His problem is that of the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Let us leave, then, both the “penal satisfaction” theories and the “moral theories” to address themselves to other men. Our traitor knows too well the sad lesson of his own deed to be aided either by the vain technicalities of the more antiquated of these theological types of theories, or by the true, but to him no longer applicable, comforts which

the theories of the other — the moral type — open to his view.

Plainly, then, the traitor himself can suggest nothing further as to his own reconciliation with the world where, by his deed of betrayal, he once chose to permit the light that was in him to become darkness. We must turn in another direction.

## VI

We have so far considered the traitor's case as if his treason had been merely an affair of his own inner life, — a sort of secret impious wish. But of course, while we are indeed supposing the traitor, — now enlightened by the view of his own deed, — to be the judge of what he himself has meant and done, — we well know that his false deed was, in his own opinion, no mere thought of unholiness. He had a cause. That is, he lived in a real world. And he was false to his cause. He betrayed. Now betrayal is something objective. It breaks ties. It rends asunder what love has joined in dear unity.

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*What* human ties the traitor broke, we leave to him to discover for himself. Why they were to his mind holy, we also need not now inquire. Enough, — since he was indeed loyal, — he had found his ties; — they were precious and human and real; and he believed them holy; — and he broke them. That is, so far as in him lay, he destroyed by his deed the community in whose brotherhood, in whose life, in whose spirit, he had found his guide and his ideal. His deed, then, concerns not himself only, but that community whereof he was a voluntary member. The community knows, or in the long run must learn, that the deed of treason has been done, even if, being itself no searcher of hearts, it cannot identify the individual traitor. We often know not who the traitors are. But if ours is the community that is wrecked, we may well know by experience that there has been treason.

The problem of reconciliation, then, — if reconciliation there is to be, — concerns not only the traitor, but the wounded or

shattered community. Endlessly varied are the problems — the tragedies, the lost causes, the heartbreaks, the chaos, which the deeds of traitors produce. All this we merely hint in passing. But all this constitutes the heart of the sorrow of the higher regions of our human world. And we here refer such countless, commonplace, but crushing tragedies to these ruins which are the daily harvest-home of treason, merely in order to ask the question: Can a genuinely spiritual community, whose ideals are such as Paul loved to portray when he wrote to his churches, — can such a loving and beloved community in any degree reconcile itself to the existence of traitors in its world, and to the deeds of individual traitors? Can it in any wise find in its world something else, over and above the treason, — something which atones for the spiritual disasters that the very being of treason both constitutes and entails? Must not the existence of traitors remain, for the offended community, an evil that is as intolerable and irrevocable and as much beyond its powers of



reconciliation as is, for the traitor himself, his own past deed, seen in all the light of its treachery? Can any soul of good arise or be created out of this evil thing, or as an atonement therefor?

You see, I hope, that I am in no wise asking whether the community which the traitor has assailed, desires, or does well either to inflict or to remit any penalties said to be due to the traitor for his deed. I am here speaking wholly of the possibility of inner and human reconciliations. The only penalty which, in the hell of the irrevocable, the traitor himself inevitably finds, is the fact: "I did it." The one irrevocable fact with which the community can henceforth seek to be reconciled, if reconciliation is possible, is the fact: "This evil was done." That is, "These invaluable ties were broken." This unity of brotherhood was shattered. The life of the community, — as it was before the blow of treason fell, — can never be restored to its former purity of unscarred love. This is the fact. For this let the community now seek, — not oblivion,



for that is a mere losing of the truth; not annulment, for that is impossible; *but* some measure of reconciliation.

For the community, as I am now viewing its ideal but still distinctly human life, the question is *not* one of what we usually call "forgiveness." If "forgiveness" means simply an affectionate remission of penalty, that is something which, for a given community, may be not only humanly possible, but obviously both wise and desirable. Penalty is no remedy for the irrevocable. Forgiveness is often both reasonable and convenient. Nor need the question be raised as to whether the community could ever trust the traitor with the old hearty human, although always fallible, confidence. What the community can know is — not the traitor's heart, but the fact — manifest through the shattered ties and the broken spiritual life, — the fact that a deed of treason has been done. That the deed was the voluntary work of just this traitor, the community can learn only as a matter of probable opinion, or perhaps

through the traitor's confession. But, just as the community cannot now search the traitor's heart, or know whether he will hereafter repeat his treason in some new form, — just so, too, it never has been able, before the deed of treason was committed, to search the hearts of any of its free and loyal members, and to know whether, in fact, its trust was wholly well founded when it believed, or hoped, that just this treason would never be committed by any one of the members whom it fondly trusted.

All the highest forms of the unity of the spirit, in our human world, constantly depend, for their very existence, upon the renewed free choices, the sustained loyalty, of the members of communities. Hence the very best that we know, namely, the loyal brotherhood of the faithful who choose to keep their faith, — this best of all human goods, I say, — is simply inseparable from countless possibilities of the worst of human tragedies, — the tragedy of broken faith. At such cost must the loftiest of our human possessions in the

realm of the spirit be purchased, — at the cost, namely, of knowing that some deed of wilful treason on the part of some one whom we trusted as brother or as beloved may rob us of this possession. And the fact that we are thus helplessly dependent on human fidelity for some of our highest goods, and so may be betrayed, — this fact is due not to the natural perversity of men, nor to the mere weakness of those who love and trust. This fact is due to something which, without any metaphysical theory, we ordinarily call man's freedom of choice. We do not want our beloved community to consist of puppets, or of merely fascinated victims of a mechanically insistent love. We want the free loyalty of those who, whatever fascination first won them to their cause, remain faithful because they choose to remain faithful. Of such is the kingdom of good faith. The beloved community demands for itself such freely and deliberately steadfast members. And for that very reason, in a world where there is such free and good faith, — there can be treason. Hence the

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realm where the spirit reaches the highest human levels is the region where the worst calamities can, and in the long run do, assail many who depend upon the good faith of their brethren.

The community, therefore, never had any grounds, before the treason, for an absolute assurance about the future traitor's perseverance in the faith. After his treason, if indeed he repents and now begins once more to act loyally, — it may acquire a relative assurance that he will henceforth abide faithful. The worst evil is not, then, that a trust in the traitor, which once was rightly serene and perfectly confident, is now irrevocably lost. It is not *this* which constitutes the irreconcilable aspect of the traitor's deed. All men are frail. And especially must those who are freely loyal possess a certain freedom to become faithless if they choose. This evil is a condition of the highest good that the human world contains. And so much the community, in presence of the traitor, ought to recognize as something that was always

possible. It also ought to know that a certain always fallible trust in the traitor can indeed be restored by his future good deeds, if such are done by him with every sign that he intends henceforth to be faithful.

But what is indeed irrevocably lost to the community through the traitor's deed is precisely what I just called "unscarred love." The traitor remains — for the community as well as for himself — the traitor, — just so far as his deed is confessed, and just so far as his once unsullied fidelity has been stained. *This* indeed is irrevocable. It is perfectly human. But it is unutterably comfortless to the shattered community.

It is useless, then, to say that the problem of reconciliation, so far as the community is concerned, is the problem of "forgiveness," not now as remission of penalty, but of forgiveness, in so far as forgiveness means a restoring of the love of the community, or of its members, towards the one who has now sinned, but repented. Love may be restored. If the traitor's future attitude

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makes that possible, human love ought to be restored to the now both repentant and well-serving doer of the past evil deed. But alas! this restored love will be the love for the member who *has been a traitor*; and the tragedy of the treason will permanently form part in and of this love. Thus, then, up to this point, there appears for the community as well as for the traitor, no ground for even the imperfect reconciliation of which we have been in search. Is there, then, any other way, still untried, in which the community may hope, if not to *find*, then to *create* something which, in its own strictly limited fashion, will reconcile the community to the traitor and to the irrevocable, and irrevocably evil, deed.

## VII

Such a way exists. The community cannot undo the traitor's deed, and cannot simply annul the now irrevocable fact of the evil which has been accomplished. Penalty, even if called for, annuls nothing of all that has



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been done. Repentance does not turn backwards the flow of time. Restored and always fallible human confidence in the traitor's good intentions regarding his future deeds, is not true reconciliation. Forgiveness does not wash out a word of the record that the moving finger of treason has written. The love of the forgiving community, or of its members, for the repentant and now well-doing traitor, is indeed a great good; but it is a love that has forever lost one of its most cherished possessions, — the possession of a loyal member who, in the old times before the treason, not only loved, but, so far, *had steadfastly kept his faith*. By all these means, then, *no* atonement is rendered to the community. Neither hatred nor penalty need be, from the side of the community, in any wise in question. But the fact remains: The community has lost its treasure; its once faithful member who, until his deed of treason came, had been wholly its own member. And it has lost the ties and the union which he destroyed by his deed. And,

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for all this loss, it lovingly mourns with a sorrow for which, thus far, we see no reconciliation. Who shall give to it its own again?

The community, then, can indeed *find* no reconciliation. But can it *create* one? At the worst, it is the traitor, and it is not the community, that has done this deed. New deeds remain to be done. The community is free to do them, or to be incarnate in some faithful servant who will do them. Could any possible new deed, done by, or on behalf of, the community, and done by some one who is *not* stained by the traitor's deed, introduce into this human world an element which, as far as it went, would be, in whatever measure, genuinely reconciling?

## VIII

We stand at the very heart and centre of the human problem of atonement. We have just now nothing to do with theological opinion on this topic. I insist that our problem is as familiar and empirical as is death or grief. That problem of atonement daily arises

not as between God and man (for we here are simply ignoring, for the time being, the metaphysical issues that lie behind our problem). That problem is daily faced by all those faithful lovers of wounded and shattered communities who, going down into the depths of human sorrow, either as sufferers or as friends who would fain console, or who, standing by hearths whose fires burn no more, or loving their country through all the sorrows which traitors have inflicted upon her, or who, not weakly, but bravely grieving over the woe of the whole human world, are still steadily determined that no principality and no power, that no height and no depth, shall be able to separate man from his true love, which is the triumph of the spirit. That human problem of atonement is, I say daily faced, and faced by the noblest of mankind. And for these our noblest, despite all our human weakness, that problem is, in principle and in ideal, daily solved. Let us turn to such leaders of the human search after greatness, as our spiritual guides.

Great calamities are, for all but the traitor himself, — so far as we have yet considered his case, — great opportunities. Lost causes have furnished, times without number, the foundations and the motives of humanity's most triumphant loyalty.

When treason has done its last and most cruel work, and lies with what it has destroyed, — dead in the tomb of the irrevocable past, — there is now the opportunity for a triumph of which I can only speak weakly and in imperfectly abstract formulas. But, as I can at once say, this of which I now speak is a human triumph. It forms part of the history of man's earthly warfare with his worst foes. Moreover, whenever it occurs at all, this is a triumph, *not* merely of stoical endurance, nor yet of kindly forgiveness, nor of the mystical mood which, seeing all things in God, feels them all to be good. It is a triumph of the creative will. And what form does it take amongst the best of men, who are here to be our guides?

I answer, this triumph over treason can

only be accomplished by the community, or on behalf of the community, through some steadfastly loyal servant who acts, so to speak, as the incarnation of the very spirit of the community itself. This faithful and suffering servant of the community may answer and confound treason by a work whose type I shall next venture to describe, in my own way, thus: First, this creative work shall include a deed, or various deeds, for which only just this treason furnishes the opportunity. Not treason in general, but just this individual treason shall give the occasion, and supply the condition of the creative deed which I am in ideal describing. Without just that treason, this new deed (so I am supposing) could not have been done at all. And hereupon the new deed, as I suppose, is so ingeniously devised, so concretely practical in the good which it accomplishes, that, when you look down upon the human world after the new creative deed has been done in it, you say, first, "This deed was made possible by that treason; and, secondly, *The world,*

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*as transformed by this creative deed, is better than it would have been had all else remained the same, but had that deed of treason not been done at all."* That is, the new creative deed has made the new world better than it was before the blow of treason fell.

Now such a deed of the creative love and of the devoted ingenuity of the suffering servant, on behalf of his community, breaks open, as it were, the tomb of the dead and treacherous past, and comes forth as the life and the expression of the creative and reconciling will. It is this creative will whose ingenuity and whose skill have executed the deed that makes the human world better than it was before the treason.

To devise and to carry out some new deed which makes the human world better than it would have been had just that treasonable deed *not* been done; — is that not, in its own limited way and sense, a reconciling form, both of invention and of conduct? Let us forget, for the moment, the traitor. Let us now think only of the community. We know



why and in what sense it cannot be reconciled to the traitor or to his deed. But have we not found, without any inconsistency, a new fact which furnishes a genuinely reconciling element? It indeed furnishes no perfect reconciliation with the irrevocable; but it transforms the meaning of that very past which it cannot undo. It cannot restore the unscarred love. It does supply a new triumph of the spirit, — a triumph which is not so much a mere compensation for what has been lost, as a transfiguration of the very loss into a gain that, without this very loss, could never have been won. The traitor cannot thus transform the meaning of his own past. But the suffering servant can thus transfigure this meaning; can bring out of the realm of death a new life that only this very death rendered possible.

The triumph of the spirit of the community over the treason which was its enemy, the rewinning of the value of the traitor's own life, when the new deed is done, involves the old tragedy, but takes up that tragedy into

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a life that is now more a life of triumph than it would have been if the deed of treason had never been done.

Therefore, if indeed you suppose or observe that, in our human world, such creative deeds occur, you see that they indeed do not remove, they do not annul, either treason or its tragedy. But they do show us a genuinely reconciling, a genuinely atoning, fact in the world and in the community of the traitor. Those who do such deeds solve, I have just said, not the impossible problem of undoing the past, but the genuine problem of finding, even in the worst of tragedies, the means of an otherwise impossible triumph. They meet the deepest and bitterest of estrangements by showing a way of reconciliation, and a way that only this very estrangement has made possible.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The view with regard to Atonement stated in the text was reached by me quite independently of any knowledge on my part of the remarkable book of Mr. Charles Allen Dinsmore: "Atonement in Literature and Life" (Boston, 1906). I am glad to find myself in close agreement with some of the essential features of Mr. Dinsmore's position. He has especially called my attention to Milton's illustration of this view of Adam's case.

## IX

This is the human aspect of the idea of atonement. Do we need to solve our theological problems before we decide whether such an idea has meaning, and is ethically defensible? I must insist that this idea comes to us, not from the scholastic quiet of theological speculation, but stained with the blood of the battle-fields of real life. For myself, I can say that no theological theory suggested to me this interpretation of the essential nature of an atoning deed. I cannot call the interpretation new, simply because I myself have learned it from observing the meaning of the lives of some suffering servants, — plain human beings, — who never cared for theology, but who incarnated in their own fashion enough of the spirit of their community to conceive and to accomplish such new and creative deeds as I have just attempted to characterize. To try to describe to you, at all adequately, the life or

the work of any such persons, I have neither the right nor the power. Here is no place for such a collection and analysis of the human form of the atoning life as only a William James could have justly accomplished. And upon personal histories I could dwell, in this place, only at the risk of intruding upon lives which I have been privileged sometimes to see afar off, and briefly, but which I have no right to report as mere illustrations of a philosophical argument. It is enough, I think, for me barely to indicate what I have in mind when I say that such things are done amongst men.

All of us well know of great public benefactors whose lives and good works have been rendered possible through the fact that some great personal sorrow, some crushing blow of private grief first descended, and seemed to wreck their lives. Such heroic souls have then been able, in these well-known types of cases, not only to bear their own grief, and to rise from the depths of it (as we all in our time have to attempt to do). They have been

able also to use their grief as the very source of the new arts and inventions and labors whereby they have become such valuable servants of their communities. Such people indeed often remind us of the suffering servant in Isaiah; for their life work shows that they are willing to be wounded for the sake of their community. Indirectly, too, they often seem to be suffering because of the faults as well as because of the griefs of their neighbors, or of mankind. And it indeed often occurs to us to speak of these public or private benefactors as living some sort of atoning life, as bearing, in a sense, not only the sorrows, but the sins of other men.

Yet it is *not* of such lives, noble as they are, that I am now thinking — nor of *such* vicarious suffering, of such sympathizing helpfulness in human woe, of such rising from private grief to public service, — that I am now speaking, when I say that atoning deeds, in the more precise sense just described, are indeed done in our human world. Sharply contrasted with these beneficent lives and

deeds, which I have just mentioned, are the other lives of which I am thinking, and to which, in speaking of atonement, I have been referring. These are the lives of which I have so little right to give more than a bare hint in this place.

One's private grief *may be* the result of the deed of a traitor. That again is something which often seems to happen in our human world. One may rally from the despair due to even such a blow, and may later become a public benefactor. We all know, I suppose, people who have done that, and whose lives are the nobler and more serviceable because they have conquered such a grief, and have learned great lessons through such a conquest. Yet even *such* lives do not show exactly the reconciling and atoning power that I now most have in mind. Let me next state a mere supposition.

Suppose a community, — a modern community, — to be engaged with the ideals and methods of modern reform, in its contests with some of those ills which the natural



viciousness, the evil training, and the treasonable choices of very many people combine to make peculiarly atrocious in the eyes of all who love mankind. Such evils need to be met, in the good warfare, not only by indignant reformers, not only by ardent enthusiasts, but also by calmly considerate and enlightened people, who distinguish clearly between fervor and wisdom, who know what depths of woe and of wrong are to be sounded, but who also know that only self-controlled thoughtfulness and well-disciplined self-restraint can devise the best means of help. As we also well know, we look, in our day, to highly trained professional skill for aid in such work. We do not hope that those who are merely well-meaning and loving can do what most needs to be done. We desire those who know. Let us suppose, then, such a modern community as especially needing, for a very special purpose, one who *does* know.

Hereupon let us suppose that one individual exists whose life has been wounded to the core by some of treason's worst blows. Let

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us suppose one who, always manifesting true loyalty and steadfastly keeping strict integrity, has known, not merely what the ordinary professional experts learn, but also what it is to be despised and rejected of men, and to be brought to the very depths of lonely desolation, and to have suffered thus through a treason which also deeply affected, not one individual only, but a whole community. Let such a soul, humiliated, offended, broken, so to speak, through the very effort to serve a community, forsaken, long daily fed only by grief, yet still armed with the grace of loyalty and of honor, and with the heroism of dumb suffering, — let such a soul not only arise, as so many great sufferers have done, from the depths of woe, — let such a soul not only triumph, as so many have done, over the grief that treason caused; but let such a soul also use the very lore which just this treason had taught, in order to begin a new life work. Let this life work be full of a shrewd, practical, serviceable, ingenious wisdom which only that one individual experi-

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ence of a great treason could have taught. Let this new life work be made possible only because of that treason. Let it bring to the community, in the contest with great public evils, methods and skill and judgment and forethought which only that so dear-bought wisdom could have invented. Let these methods have, in fact, a skill that the traitor's own wit has taught, and that is now used for the good work. Let that life show, not only what treason can do to wreck, but what the free spirit can learn from and through the very might of treason's worst skill.

If you will conceive of such a life merely as a possibility, you may know why I assert that genuinely atoning deeds occur, and what I believe such deeds to be. For myself, any one who should supply the facts to bear out my supposition ( and such people, as I assert, there are in our human world) would appear henceforth to me to be a sort of symbolic personality, — one who had descended into hell to set free the spirits who are in prison. When I hear those words, “descended into

hell," repeated in the creed, I think of such human beings, and feel that I know at least some in our human world to whom the creed in these words refers.

X

Hereupon, you may very justly say that the mere effects of the atoning deeds of a human individual are in this world apparently petty and transient; and that even the most atoning of sacrificial human lives can devise nothing which, within the range of our vision, *does* make the world of the community better, in any of its most tragic aspects, than it would be if no treason had been committed.

If you say this, you merely give me the opportunity to express the human aspect of the idea of the atonement in a form very near to the form which, as I believe, the Christian idea of atonement has always possessed when the interests of the religious consciousness (or, if I may use the now favorite word, the subconsciousness) of the Church, rather than

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the theological formulations of the theory of atonement, have been in question. Christian feeling, Christian art, Christian worship, have been full of the sense that *somehow* (and *how* has remained indeed a mystery) there was something so precious about the work of Christ, something so divinely wise (so skilful and divinely beautiful?) about the plan of salvation, — that, as a result of all this, after Christ's work was done, the world as a whole was a nobler and richer and worthier creation than it would have been if Adam had not sinned.

This, I insist, has always been felt to be the sense of the atoning work which the faith has attributed to Christ. A glance at a great Madonna, a chord of truly Christian music, ancient or modern, tells you that this is so. And this sense of the atoning work cannot be reduced to what the modern "moral" theories of the Christian atonement most emphasize.

For what the Christian regards as the atoning work of Christ is, from this point of view,

*not* something about Christ's work which merely arouses in sinful man love and repentance.

No, the theory of atonement which I now suggest, and which, as I insist, is subconsciously present in the religious sentiment, ritual, and worship of all Christendom, is a perfectly "objective" theory, — quite as "objective" as any "penal satisfaction" theory could be. Christian religious feeling has always expressed itself in the idea that what atones is something perfectly "objective," namely, Christ's work. And this atoning work of Christ was for Christian feeling a deed that was made possible only through man's sin, but that somehow was so wise and so rich and so beautiful and divinely fair that, after this work was done, the world was a better world than it would have been had *man* never sinned.

So the Christian consciousness, I insist, has always felt. So its poets have often, in one way or another, expressed the matter. The theologians have disguised this simple



idea under countless forms. But every characteristically Christian act of worship expresses it afresh. Treason did its work (so the legend runs) when man fell. But Christ's work was so perfect that, in a perfectly objective way, it took the opportunity which man's fall furnished to make the world better than it could have been had man not fallen.

But this is indeed, as an idea concerning God and the universe and the work of Christ, an idea which is as human in its spirit, and as deep in its relation to truth, as it is, in view of the complexity of the values which are in question, hard either to articulate or to defend. How should we know, unless some revelation helped us to know, whether and in what way Christ's supposed work made the world better than it would have been had man not sinned?

But in this discussion I am speaking of the purely human aspect of the idea of atonement. *That* aspect is now capable of a statement which does not pretend to deal with any but our human world, and which fully

admits the pettiness of every human individual effort to produce such a really atoning deed as we have described.

The human community, depending, as it does, upon its loyal human lovers, and wounded to the heart by its traitors, and finding, the farther it advances in moral worth, the greater need of the loyal, and the greater depth of the tragedy of treason, — utters its own doctrine of atonement as this postulate, — the central postulate of its highest spirituality. This postulate I word thus: *No baseness or cruelty of treason so deep or so tragic shall enter our human world, but that loyal love shall be able in due time to oppose to just that deed of treason its fitting deed of atonement.* The deed of atonement shall be so wise and so rich in its efficacy, that the spiritual world, after the atoning deed, shall be better, richer, more triumphant amidst all its irrevocable tragedies, than it was before that traitor's deed was done.

This is the postulate of the highest form of human spirituality. It cannot be proved by

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the study of mankind as they are. It can be asserted by the creative will of the loyal. Christianity expressed this postulate in the symbolic form of a report concerning the supernatural work of Christ. Humanity must express it through the devotion, the genius, the skill, the labor of the individual loyal servants in whom its spirit becomes incarnate.

As a Christian idea, the atonement is expressed in a symbol, whose divine interpretation is merely felt, and is viewed as a mystery. As a human idea, atonement is expressed (so far as it can at any one time be expressed) by a peculiarly noble and practically efficacious type of human deeds. This human idea of atonement is also expressed in a postulate which lies at the basis of all the best and most practical spirituality. The Christian symbol and the practical postulate are two sides of the same life, — at once human and divine.



## VII

### THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF LIFE





## LECTURE VII

### THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF LIFE

**T**HROUGHOUT these lectures, both the contrast and the close connection between ethical and religious ideas have been illustrated. Ethical ideas define the nature of righteous conduct. Religious ideas have to do with bringing us into union with some supremely valuable form or level of life. Morality gives us counsel as to our duty. Religion, pointing out to us the natural poverty and failure which beset our ordinary existence, undertakes to show us some way of salvation. Ethical teachings direct us to a better mode of living. Religion undertakes to lead us to a home-land where we may witness, and, if we are successful, may share some supreme fulfilment of the purpose for which we live. In the Sermon on the Mount, the counsel, "Judge not that ye be not judged," is ethical; the beatitudes are religious. When Paul rebukes the Corinthians for their

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disputes, his teaching is, in so far, ethical. When he writes the great chapter on Charity, his doctrine is religious.

Now what I here mean by a "doctrine of life" comprises both ethical and religious elements. It brings these elements into unity, and, if it is a sound doctrine, it gives us both a connected survey of some notable portion of our duty, and an insight into the nature and source of the supreme values of our existence.

A religious doctrine very generally includes some assertions about the real world such that they can be elaborately tested only in case one is willing to undertake a metaphysical inquiry. But, as we have repeatedly seen in these lectures, both ethical and religious doctrines also deal with many matters which we can test, sufficiently for some of our most serious purposes, without raising issues which are technically and formally metaphysical. And that is why we have so far postponed any metaphysical study of the foundations which the various essential ideas of Christianity

possess in the nature of the real universe. Both the ethical significance and the religious spirit which these ideas assure, we could in large measure estimate merely by taking account of the acknowledged facts of human nature.

A doctrine of life — that is, a coherent and comprehensive teaching concerning both the moral conduct of life, and the realm wherein the highest good is to be hoped for, sought, and, haply, won — will therefore, like the various ethical and religious ideas which inform such a general survey and estimate of human life, arouse many metaphysical questions. But, in large part, it can be both stated and estimated without answering these metaphysical questions in a technical way.

The present lecture is to be devoted to bringing together the essential Christian ideas which we have considered in the foregoing discussions, and to stating, as the result of a synthesis of these ideas, some aspects of the Christian doctrine of life.

## I

This lecture will presuppose, and will not attempt to repeat, many of the most familiar of the moral precepts which characterize the Christian view of conduct. What I have time to dwell upon ought so to be selected that essential and weighty matters come to our notice. But if any one finds that my sketch omits much that is also of importance for the Christian definition of our duty, let him know from the start that I aim at certain larger connections, and endeavor to set down here genuinely Christian teachings about duty, but that I do not hope to be exhaustive in any part of my report.

Such moral teachings of Christianity as I can restate will be intimately connected with Christian views about life which are also religiously important. I shall make no effort to keep asunder, in my sketch, the ethical teachings and the religious interests of Christianity. In our study of the ethical value

of the separate ideas, I have unhesitatingly passed from the strictly ethical to the obviously religious aspect of these ideas, whenever it was convenient to do so, always postponing, for reasons which I have repeatedly explained, the technically metaphysical problems which both the ethical and the religious sides of the questions at issue have involved.

You can, for convenience, sunder your treatment, both of ethical and of religious problems, from your technical metaphysics. But ethics and religion, in a case such as that of Christianity, can indeed be contrasted; but cannot profitably be kept apart in your exposition. This, I suppose, has been manifest at each stage of our foregoing discussion of the different Christian ideas. It will be more than ever manifest in the present portrayal of the connected whole to which they belong.

## II

What is essential to the Christian doctrine of life can be brought to mind, at this point, more readily than in any other way known to

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me, by a very brief contrast between some features of the Christian religion, and the corresponding features of the greatest historical rival of Christianity, namely, Buddhism. Of the latter religion I know, like most philosophical students of my type of training, only very superficially, and mainly at second hand. What I mention regarding that matter has therefore merely the value of emphasizing the contrast to which I am to direct attention, and of thus illustrating the position of Christianity.

Let me begin my sketch by pointing out some features wherein these two great religions agree.

Both Christianity and Buddhism are products of long and vast processes of religious evolution. Both of them originally appealed to mature and complex civilizations. Yet both of them intended that their appeal should, in the end, be made to all mankind. Both of them deliberately transcended the limits of caste, of rank, of nation, and of race, and undertook to carry their message to all



sorts and conditions of men. Both showed, as missionary religions, an immense power of assimilation. Both freely used, so far as they could do so without sacrificing essentials, the religious ideas which they found present in the various lands that their missionaries reached; and, like Paul, both of them became all things to all men, if haply they might thereby win any man to the faith that they thought to be saving.

Both were redemptive religions, which condemned both the mind and the sins of the natural man; and taught salvation through a transformation of the innermost being of this natural man. Each developed a great variety of sects and of forms of social life. Each made use of religious orders as a means of separating those who, while desirous of salvation, were able, in their present existence, to live only in a close contact with the world, from those who could aim directly at the highest grades of perfection.

Each of these two religions attempts, by a frank exposure of the centrally important

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facts of our life, to banish the illusions which bind us fast to earth, and, as they both maintain, to destruction. Each is therefore, in its own way, austere and unsparing in the speech which it addresses to the natural man. Each shuns mere popularity, and is transparently honest in its estimate of the vanities of the world. Each aims at the heart of our defects. Each says: "What makes your life a wreck and a failure, is that your very essence as a human self is, in advance of the saving process, a necessary source of woe and wrong. Each of the two religions insists upon the inmost life of the heart as the source whence proceeds all that is evil, and whence may proceed all that can become good about man. Each rejects the merely outward show of our deeds as a means for determining whether we are righteous or not. Each demands absolute personal sincerity from its followers. Each blesses the pure in heart, requires strict self-control, and makes an inner concentration of mind upon the good end an essential feature of piety. Each preaches kindness toward

all mankind, including our enemies. Each condemns cruelty and malice. Each, in fact, permits no human enmities. Each is a religion that exalts those who, in the world's eyes, are weak.

And not only in these more distinctly ethical ideas do the two religions agree. Each of them has its own world of spiritual exaltation; its realm that is not only moral, but deeply religious; its home-land of deliverance, where the soul that is saved finds rest in communion with a peace that the world can neither give nor take away.

In these very important respects, therefore, the distinctly religious features of the two faiths are intimately related. In case of each of the two religions, but in the case of Buddhism rather more than in the case of Christianity, it is possible, and in fact just and requisite, to distinguish its ideas of the nature and the means and the realm of salvation from the metaphysical opinions which a more or less learned exposition of the doctrines of the faith almost inevitably uses.

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Buddhism has its ideas of the moral order of the universe, of Nirvana, and of the Buddhas, — the beings who attain supreme enlightenment, — and who thereby save the world. These ideas invite metaphysical speculation, and furnish motives that tended towards the building up of a theology, and that, in the end, produced a theology. But each of these religious ideas, in the case of Buddhism, can be defined without defining either a metaphysical or a theological system. The original teaching of Gotama Buddha rejected all metaphysical speculation, and insisted solely upon the ethical foundations of the doctrine, and upon those distinctly religious, but non-metaphysical, views of salvation, and of the higher spiritual life, which Buddha preferred to depict in parables, rather than to render needlessly abstruse through discussions such as, in his opinion, did not tend to edification.

The common ethical and religious features of Christianity and Buddhism are thus both many and impressive. Some of the greatest

life questions are faced by both religions, and, in the respects which I have now pointed out, are answered in substantially the same way. Moreover, in several of the ethical and religious ideas in which these two religions agree with each other, they do not closely agree with any other religion. So far as I can venture to judge, no other religions that have attempted to appeal to the deepest and most universal interests of mankind have been so free as both Buddhism and Christianity are from bondage to national, to racial, and to worldly antagonisms and prejudices. No others have made so central, as they both have done, the conception of a personal saviour of mankind, whose dignity depends both upon the moral merits of his teaching and of his life, and upon the religious significance of the spiritual level to which he led the way, thus moulding both the thoughts and the lives of his followers.

When we add to all these parallels the fact that each of these religions had an historical founder, whose life later came to be the object

of many legendary reports; and that the legends, in each case, were so framed by the religious imagination of the early followers of the faith in question that they include a symbolism, whereby a portion of the true meaning of each faith is expressed in the stories about the founder, — when, I say, we add this fact to all the others, we get some hint of the very genuine community of spirit which belongs to these two great world religions. That the imaginative Buddha-legends show an unrestrained and often helpless disposition to adorn the religion with an edifying body of miraculous tales, while the relative self-restraint of the early Christian Church in holding in check, as much as it did, its vigorous myth-making tendencies, remains, in many respects, a permanent marvel, — all this constitutes a very notable contrast between the two faiths. But this is, in part, a contrast between the two civilizations (so remote, in many ways, from each other) whose development lay at the basis of the two religions. Buddhism was more sur-



rounded by an atmosphere of magic than the Christian Church ever was. Yet in those essentials which I have just reported, the agreements and analogies between the two faiths are both close and momentous. So far the two seem to be genuine co-workers in the same vast task of the ages, — the salvation of man, through the transformation of a natural life into a life whose dwelling-place lies beyond human woe and sin.

### III

Wherein, then, lies the most essential contrast between the Christian and the Buddhist doctrines of life? This contrast, when it once comes to light, is, to my mind, far more impressive than are the agreements. It has often been discussed. What I say about it is the word of one who cannot decide problems of the comparative history of religion. But I must venture my own statement at this point, despite my comparative ignorance of Buddhism; because the contrast in question seems to me so illuminating for one

who wishes clearly to grasp the essence of Christianity.

The most familiar way of stating this contrast is to say that Buddhism is pessimistic, while Christianity is a religion of hope. This is, in part, true; but it is not very enlightening, unless the spirit of Christian hopefulness is more fully explained, and unless the Buddhist pessimism is quite justly appreciated. Both religions hope for salvation; and, for each of them, salvation means an overcoming of the world. Each deplores humanity as it is, and means to transform us. The contrast is, therefore, hardly to be defined as a contrast of hope with despair. For each undertakes to overcome the world, and assures us that we can be transformed. And each regards our natural state as one worthy of despair, were not the way of salvation opened.

Nearer to the whole truth seems to be that frequently repeated statement of the matter which insists upon the creative attitude which Christianity requires the will to take, as against the quietism of Buddha. Buddhism, as we

mentioned in a former lecture, has as its goal a certain passionless contemplation, in which the distinction of one individual from another is of no import, so that the self, as *this* self, vanishes. Christianity conceives love as positively active, and dwells upon a hope of immortality.

Nevertheless, the concept of beatitude, as the Christian thought of the Middle Ages formulated that concept, sets the contemplative life nearer the goal than the active life, even when the active life is one of charity. Hence, in their more mystical moods and expressions, the two religions are, once more, much more largely in agreement than our own very natural partisanship, determined by our Christian traditions, tends to make us admit.

It is also true that Buddhism aims at the extinction of the individual self; while Christianity assigns to the human individual an infinite worth. And this is indeed a vastly important difference. Yet this very importance remains unexplained, and a mere formula, until you see what it is about the human

individual which constitutes, for the Christian view, his importance. One may answer, in simple terms, that, according to the teachings of Jesus, the individual is infinitely important, because the Father loves him; while Buddhism, in its original Southern form, has nothing to offer that is equivalent to this love of God for the individual man. Yet the further question has to be faced: Why and for what end does the God of Christianity love the individual? And it is here, at last, that you come face to face with the deepest contrast.

For God's love towards the individual is, from the Christian point of view, a love for one whose destiny it is to be a *member of the Kingdom of Heaven*. The Kingdom of Heaven is essentially a community. And the idea of this community, as the founder in parables prophetically taught that idea, developed into the conception which the Christian Church formed of its own mission; and through all changes, and despite all human failures, this conception remains a sovereign treasure of the Christian world.

## IV

The Individual *and* the Community: this, if I may so express a perfectly human antithesis in religious and deliberately symbolic speech, — this pair of terms and of ideas is, so to speak, the *sacred pair*, to whose exposition and to whose practical application the whole Christian doctrine of life is due. This pair it is which, in the first place, enables Christianity to tell the individual why, in his natural isolation and narrowness, he is essentially defective, — is inevitably a failure, is doomed, and must be transformed. This, if you choose, is the root and core of man's original sin, — namely, the very form of his being as a morally detached individual. This is the bondage of his flesh; this is the soul of his corruption; this is his alienation from true life; this fact, namely, that by nature, as a social animal, he is an individual who, though fast bound by ties which no man can rend, to the community wherein he chances to be born or trained, nevertheless,

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*until* the true love of a community, and *until* the beloved community itself appear in his life, is a stranger in his father's house, a hater of his only chance of salvation, a worldling, and a worker of evil deeds, a miserable source of misery. *This* is why, for Christianity, the salvation of man means the destruction of his natural self, — the sacrifice of what his flesh holds dearest, — the utter transformation of the primal core of the social self. I say: it is the merely natural relation of the individual to the community which, for Christianity, explains all this. Here are the two levels of human existence. The individual, born on his own level, is naturally doomed to hatred for what belongs to the other level. Yet there, on that higher level, his only salvation awaits him.

Buddhism fully knows, and truly teaches, where the root of bitterness is to be found, — not in the outward deed, but in the inmost heart of the individual self. But what, so far as I know, the original Southern Buddhism *never* clearly made a positive part of its own



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plan of the salvation of mankind, is a transformation of the self, *not* through the *mere* destruction of the narrow and corrupt flesh which alienates it from the true life, *but by the simple and yet intensely positive* DEVOTION *of the self to a new task, — to its creative office as a loyal member of a beloved community.* Early Buddhism never, so far as I know, clearly defined its ideal of the beloved community in terms which make that community, viewed simply as an ideal, one conscious unity of the business, of the eager hopes, and of the patiently ingenious and endlessly constructive love, of all mankind.

The ideal Christian community is one in which compassion is a mere incident in the realization of the new life, not only of brotherly concord, but also of an interminably positive creation of new social values, all of which exist for many souls in one spirit. The ideal Christian community of all mankind is to be as intimate in its enthusiasm of service as the daily life of a Pauline church was intended by the apostle to be, —

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and as novel in its inventions of new arts of common living as the gifts of the spirit in the early Christian Church were believed to be novel. The ideal Christian community is to be the community of all mankind, — as completely united in its inner life as one conscious self could conceivably become, and as destructive of the natural hostilities and of the narrow passions which estrange individual men, as it is skilful in winning from the infinite realm of bare possibilities concrete arts of control over nature and of joy in its own riches of grace. This free and faithful community of all mankind, wherein the individuals should indeed die to their own natural life, but should also enjoy a newness of positive life, — this community never became, so far as I can learn, a conscious ideal for early Buddhism.

How far the Japanese religion of loyalty, in its later forms of modified Buddhism, or in its other phases, has approached, or will hereafter approach, to an independent and original definition of the positive and con-

structive ideal of a conscious and universal human community which is here in question, I am quite unable to judge. The Japanese Buddhist sects well know what salvation by grace is. They well conceive and accept the doctrine of the incarnation of the divine being in a supernatural individual man; and are certainly universal in their general conceptions of some sort of human brotherhood. And they have reached these religious ideas quite apart from any dependence upon Christianity.

But what I miss in their religious conceptions, so far as I have read reports of these conceptions, is such a solution of the problem of human life in terms of loyalty, as *at once* demands the raising of the human self from the level of its natural narrowness, to the level of a complete and conscious personal membership in a beloved community, and *at the same time* defines the ideal community to whose level and in whose spirit we are to live, as the community of all mankind, and as one endlessly creative and conscious human

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spirit, whose life is to be lived upon its own level, and of whose dominion there is to be, in ideal and in meaning, no end.

The familiar article in the Christian creed which expresses this perfectly concrete and practical and also religious ideal, and expresses it in terms whose ethical and whose religious value you can test by personal and social experience, whatever may be your own definition of the dogmas of the Church, and whatever your metaphysical opinions may be, and whatever form of the visible or invisible Church chances best to seem to meet this your interpretation, — the familiar article of the Christian creed which expresses, I say, this ideal, just as an ideal, uses the words: “I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints.” My earlier exposition of this idea sadly failed if I did not show you how one can understand and accept the spirit of this article of the creed, without accepting the dogmas or the obedience or the practice of any one form of the visible Christian Church. But it was this

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which I had in mind when I said, in our opening lecture, that Christianity has furnished mankind with its most impressive and inspiring vision of the home-land of the spirit.

### V

Ethically speaking, the counsels which this Christian idea of the community implies, include all the familiar maxims of the Sermon on the Mount and all the lessons of the parables, but tend to give to them such sorts of development as the ideals of the early Church, in Pauline and post-Pauline times, gradually gave to them. Always what I have called the difference between the two levels of our human existence must be borne in mind, if the interpretation of Christian love is to become as concrete as Paul made it in his epistles, and as concrete as later ages have attempted to keep it, even while developing its meaning.

You love your neighbor, first, because God loves him. Yes, but how and why does God love him? Because God loves the Kingdom

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of Heaven; and the Kingdom of Heaven is a perfectly live unity of individual men joined in one divine chorus — an unity of men who, *except* through their attachment to this life which exists on the level of the beloved community of the Kingdom of Heaven, would be miserable breeders of woe, and would be lost souls. Let your love for them be a love for your fellow-members in this Kingdom of Heaven.

Yes; but *this* neighbor is your enemy; or he belongs to the wrong tribe or caste or sect. Do not consider these unhappy facts as having any bearing on your love for him. For the ethical side of the doctrine of life concerns not what you *find*, but what you are to *create*. Now God means this man to become a member of the community which constitutes the Kingdom of Heaven; and God loves this man accordingly. View him, then, as the soldier views the comrade who serves the same flag with himself, and who dies for the same cause. In the Kingdom you, and your enemy, and yonder stranger, are one.



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For the Kingdom is the community of God's beloved.

As for the way in which you are to love, make that way of loving, to your own mind, more alive, by recalling the meaning of your own dearest friendships. Think of the *closest* unity of human souls that you know. Then conceive of the Kingdom in terms of such love. When friends really join hands and hearts and lives, it is not the mere collection of sundered organisms and of divided feelings and will that these friends view as their life. Their life, as friends, is the unity which, while above their own level, wins them to itself and gives them meaning. This unity is the vine. They are the branches.

Now of such unity is the Kingdom of Heaven. See, then, in every man the branch of such a vine, — the outflowing of such a purpose, — the beloved of such a spirit, the incarnation of such a divine concern for many in one. And then your Christian love will be much more than mere pity, — will be greater than any amiable sympathy with the

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longings of those poor creatures of flesh could, of itself, become. Your love will then become the Charity that never faileth. For its object is the Beloved Community, and the individual as, ideally, a member of that community.

Is such a regard for individuals too impersonal to meet the spirit of the parables? No, — it does not destroy, it fulfils, as the early Christian Church, in ideal, fulfilled the spirit of the parables. Paul spoke thus, and thereby made Christian love more rather than less personal.

If by person you merely mean the morally detached individual man, then the community, — the Kingdom of Heaven, is indeed superpersonal. If, by person, you mean a live unity of knowledge and of will, of love and of deed, — then the community of the Kingdom of Heaven is a person on a higher level than is the level of any human individual; and the Kingdom of Heaven is at once within you, and above you, — a human life, and yet a life whose tabernacles are built upon a Mount of Transfiguration.

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Reconsider familiar parables in the light of such an interpretation, — an interpretation as old and familiar as it is persistently ignored or misunderstood. That, I insist, is a useful way of restating the Christian moral doctrine of life.

Over what does the Father in the parable of the Prodigal Son rejoice? Over the mere delight that his son's presence now gives him, and over the feasting and the merriment that his own forgiving power supplies to the repentant outcast? No, the Father has won again, not merely his son as a hungry creature who can repent and be fed. The Father has won again the unbroken community of his family. It is the Father's house that rejoices. It is this community which makes merry; and the father is, for the moment, simply the incarnation of the spirit of this community.

*Why* is there more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons? *Why* is the lost sheep sought in the wilderness? Because the individual soul has its infinite meaning in and through

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the unity of the Kingdom. The one lost sheep, found again, — or the one repentant sinner, — symbolizes the restoration of the unity of this community, as the keystone stands for the sense of the whole arch, as the flag symbolizes the country.

And *why*, in the parable of the judgment, does the judge of all the earth identify himself with “the least of these my brethren,” — with the stranger, with the sick, with the captive? Because the judge of all the earth is explicitly the spirit of the universal community, who speaks in the name of all who are one in the light and in the life of the Kingdom of Heaven.

## VI

These things remind us how ill those interpret the teachings of the Master who see in them a merely amiable fondness for what any morally detached individual happens to love or to suffer or seem. It is the ideal oneness of the life of the Kingdom of Heaven which glorifies and renders significant every

human individual who loves the Kingdom, or whom God views as such a lover. And because Paul had before him the life of the churches, while the Master left the Kingdom of Heaven for the future to reveal, Paul's account of Christian morals is an enrichment, and a further fulfilment of what the parables began to tell, and left to the coming of the Kingdom to make manifest.

In such wise, then, are the familiar precepts to be interpreted, if the Christian doctrine of the moral life is to be what it was intended to be, — not a body of maxims and of illustrations, but a living and growing expression of the life-spirit of Christianity.

For the doctrine, if thus interpreted, points you not only backwards to the reported words of the Master, but endlessly forwards into the region where humanity, as it continues through the coming ages, must, with an unwearied patience, labor and experiment, and invent and create. The true moral code of Christianity has always been and will remain fluent as well as decisive. Only so could it

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express the Master's true spirit. It therefore must not view either the parables or the sayings as a storehouse of maxims, or even as a treasury of individual examples and of personal expressions of the Master's mind, expressions such that these maxims, these examples, and these personal sayings of the Master can never be surpassed in their ethical teachings. The doctrine of the sayings and of the parables actually cries out for reinterpretation, for the creation of a novel life. That seems to me precisely what the founder himself intended. The early apostolic Churches fulfilled the Master's teaching by surpassing it, and were filled with the spirit of their Master just because they did so. This, to my mind, is a central lesson of the early development of Christianity.

All morality, namely, is, from this point of view, to be judged by the standards of the Beloved Community, of the ideal Kingdom of Heaven. Concretely stated, this means that you are to test every course of action *not* by the question: What can we find in the par-



ables or in the Sermon on the Mount which seems to us more or less directly to bear upon this special matter? The central doctrine of the Master was: "So act that the Kingdom of Heaven may come." This means: So act as to help, however you can, and whenever you can, towards making mankind one loving brotherhood, whose love is not a mere affection for morally detached individuals, but a love of the unity of its own life upon its own divine level, and a love of individuals in so far as they can be raised to communion with this spiritual community itself.

## VII

Now if we speak in purely human, and still postpone any speaking in metaphysical, terms, the community of all mankind is an ideal. Just now, just in this year or on this day, there exists no human community that is adequately conscious of its own unity, adequately creative of what it ought to create, adequately representative, on its own level, of the real and human communion of the spirit. Our

best communities of to-day either take account of caste or of nation or of race, as all the political communities do, or else, when deliberately aiming at universality and at religious unity, they exclude one another; and are therefore not, in an ideal sense and degree, beloved communities. Two things, if no other, stand between even the best of the churches as they are, — between them, I say, and the attainment of the goal of the truly beloved and the universal human community.

The one thing is their sectarian character, — excluding, as they do, the one the other. The other thing is their official organization, which cultivates, in each of the more highly developed communities of this type, a respect for the law at precisely the expense of that which Paul experienced in case of the legal aspect of the Judaism in which he was trained.

No, — the universal and beloved community is still hidden from our imperfect human view, and will remain so, how long we know not.

Nevertheless, the principle of principles in all Christian morals remains this: — “Since you cannot *find* the universal and beloved community, — *create* it.” And this again, applied to the concrete art of living, means: Do whatever you can to take a step towards it, or to assist anybody, — your brother, your friend, your neighbor, your country, — mankind, — to take steps towards the organization of that coming community.

That, I say, is the principle of principles for Christian morals. But, for that very reason, there can be no code of Christian morals, nor any one set of personal examples, or of sayings, or of parables, or of other narratives, which will do more than to arouse us to create something new on our way towards the goal. Christian morality will not, either suddenly or gradually, conquer the world. But, if Christianity, conceived in its true spirit, retains its hold upon mankind, humanity will go on creating new forms of Christian morality; whose only persistent feature will be that they intend to aid men to make their

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personal, their friendly, their social, their political, their religious orders and organizations such that mankind comes more and more to resemble the ideal, the beloved, the universal community. And the ethical aspect of the creed of the Christian world always will include this article: "I believe in the beloved community and in the spirit which makes it beloved, and in the communion of all who are, in will and in deed, its members. I see no such community as yet; but none the less my rule of life is: Act so as to hasten its coming."

Now such an ethical creed is not a vague humanitarian enthusiasm. For it simply requires that we work with whatever concrete human materials we have for creating both the organization of communities and the love for them. The work is without any human conclusion that we can foresee. But it can be made always definite, simply by resoluteness, in union with devotion. *That* is the type of work which always has been characteristically Christian, and which promises to remain so.

## VIII

The Christian idea of the community and of its relation to the way of salvation requires for its complete appreciation a comparison and synthesis which shall also include the idea of Atonement.

In the foregoing lecture we endeavored to set the religious value of the idea of atonement in a light which must be, for many minds, somewhat novel; for otherwise the idea of atonement would not have been so long and so variously rendered more mysterious by the technically theological treatment which has been freely devoted to it. Nevertheless, in its deepest spirit, this very idea of atonement has been so dear to the religious mind of Christendom, and so familiar in art, in worship, and in contemplation, that it simply ought not to appear so mysterious. The fate of the Christian idea of atonement has been, that what Christian piety felt to be the head of the corner, the Christian intellect has either rejected, or else, even in trying to defend the

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atonement, has made a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.

Between the idea of the saving community and the idea of atonement, lie the gravest of Christian ideas, — those which many optimists find too discouraging to face, or too austere to be wholesome. These are: the idea of sin, the idea of our original bondage to sin, and the idea of the consequences involved in defining sin as an inner voluntary inclination of the mind, rather than as an outwardly manifest evil deed. These ideas about sin are in part common, as we have said, to Christianity and to Buddhism.

But, as a fact, Christianity has so developed these very ideas, has so united them with the conception of the grace and of the loyalty which save men from their natural sinfulness, that just these conceptions regarding sin, despite the fact that Matthew Arnold thought them too likely to lead to a brooding wherein “many have perished,” are ideas such that their rightful definition renders Christianity what, for Paul, it became, a religion of spiritual freedom.



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In our studies of the moral burden of the individual, and of the realm of grace, we have seen how Christianity is a religion dependent, for its conception of original sin, upon the most characteristic features of that social cultivation whereby we are brought to a high level of self-consciousness. Early Buddhism had, so far as I am aware, no views about the nature of the social self as clear as those which Paul attained and, in his own way, expressed. But this very doctrine about "the law," — that is, about the social origin of the individual self, and about that which "causes sin to abound," is a theory which lies at the root of the power and the right of Christianity to say, to the self which has first attained sinful cultivation in self-will, and which has then been transformed by "grace" into a loyal self, precisely what Paul said to his converts: "All things are yours." For the doctrine of Paul is, that the escape from original sin comes through the acceptance of a service which is perfect freedom. Out of the Christian doctrine of sin grows the Christian

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teaching about the freedom of the faithful, — a teaching which, in its turn, lies at the basis of some of the most important developments of the modern mind. The doctrine of sin need not lead, then, to brooding. It may lead to spiritual self-possession.

The doctrine of atonement enables us to extend the Pauline theory of salvation by grace, so that not merely our originally helpless bondage to the results of our social cultivation is removed by the grace of loyalty, but the saddest of all the forms and consequences of wilful sin, — namely, the deed and the result of conscious disloyalty, can be brought within the range which the grace of the will of the community can reach. The result of our discussion in the last lecture has been that, if we are right, the idea of atonement has a perfectly indispensable office, both in the ethical and in the religious task which the Christian doctrine of life has to accomplish.

## IX

Let me try to make a little more obvious the interpretation of the idea of atonement which, in the last lecture, I stated in outline. Let me use for this purpose another illustration.

If my view about the essence of the idea of atonement is correct, the first instance of an extended account of an atoning process which the Biblical narratives include, would be the story of Joseph and his brethren. Let us treat this story, of course, as obviously a little romance. We study merely its value as an illustration. The brethren sin against Joseph, and against their father. Their deed has some of the characteristics, not of mere youthful folly, but of maturely wilful treason. They assail not merely their brother, but their father's love for the lost son. Their crime is carefully considered, and is deeply treacherous. But it goes still farther. The treason is directed against their whole family community. Now, in the long run, according to the beauti-

ful tale, Joseph not only comforts his father, and is able to be a forgiving benefactor to his brethren, but in such wise atones for the sin of his brethren that the family unity is restored. Here, then, is felt to be a genuine atonement. Wherein does it consist?

Does it consist in this, that the brethren have earned a just penalty which, as a fact, they never adequately suffer; while Joseph, guiltless of their wilful sin, vicariously suffers a penalty which he has not deserved? Does the atonement further consist in the fact that Joseph is able and willing freely to offer, for the good of the family, both the merits and the providential good fortune which this vicarious endurance of his has won?

No, — this “penal satisfaction” theory of the atoning work of Joseph, if it were proposed as an example of a doctrine of atonement, certainly would not meet that sense of justice, and of the fitness of things, and of the true value of Joseph’s life and deeds, — that sense, I say, which every child who first hears the story readily feels, — without in the least

being able to tell what he feels. If one magnified the deed of Joseph to the infinite, and said, as many have said, "Such a work as Joseph did for his brethren, even such a work, in his own divinely supreme way and sense Christ did for sinful man," — would *that* theory of the matter make the nature of atonement obvious? Would a vicarious "penal satisfaction" help one to understand either one or the other of these instances of atonement?

But let us turn from such now generally discredited "penal satisfaction" theories to the various forms of modern moral theories. Let us say, applying our explanations once more to the story of Joseph: "God's Providence sent Joseph into captivity, through the sin of his brethren, but still under a divine decree. Joseph was obedient and faithful and pure-minded. God rewarded his patience and fidelity by giving him power in Egypt. Then Joseph, having suffered and triumphed, set before his brethren (not without a due measure of gently stern rebuke for their past misdeeds), an example of love and forgiveness

so moving, that they deeply repented, confessed their sins, and loved their brother as never before. *That* was Joseph's atonement. And that, if magnified to the infinite, gives one a view of the sense in which the work of Christ atones for man's sin." Would such an account help us to understand atonement, either in Joseph's case, or in the other?

I should reply that such moral theories of atonement, applied to the story of Joseph, miss the most obvious point and beauty of the tale; and also show us in no wise what genuine atoning work the Joseph of the story did. Would the mere repentance, or the renewed love of the treacherous brethren for Joseph, or their wish to be forgiven, or their confession of their sin, constitute a sufficient ground for the needed reconciliation, in view of their offence against their brother, their father, or their family? If this was all the atonement which Joseph's labors supplied, he failed in his supposed office. Something more is needed to satisfy even the child who enjoys the story.

But now, let us become as little children



ourselves. Let us take the tale as a sensitive child takes it, when its power first enters his soul. Let us simply articulate what the child feels. Here, according to the tale, is a patriarchal family invaded by a wilful treason, wounded to the core, desolated, broken. The years go by. The individual who was most directly assailed by the treason is guiltless himself of any share in that treason. He is patient and faithful and obedient. When power comes to him, he uses that power (which only just this act of treason could have put into his hands), first, to accomplish a great work of good for the community of a great kingdom. Herewith, according to the tale, he provides for the future honor and glory of his own family for all time to come. And then, being brought once more into touch with his family, he behaves with such clemency, and justice, and family loyalty; he shows such transient but amiable brotherly severity towards the former traitors, he shows also such tender filial devotion; his weeping when the family unity is restored is so rich in

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pathos; his care in providing for his father and for the future is so wise; his creative skill in making again into one fair whole what treason had shattered is so wonderful, — that all these things together make the situation one whereof the child says without definite words, what we now say: “Through Joseph’s work all is made, in fact, better than it would have been had there been no treason at all.” Now I submit that Joseph’s atoning work consists simply in this triumphantly ingenious creation of good out of ill. That the brethren confess and repent is inevitable, and is a part of the good result; but by itself that is only a poor offering on their part. It is Joseph who atones. His atonement is, of course, vicarious. But it is perfectly objective. And it is no vicarious “penal satisfaction” whatever. It is simply the triumph of the spirit of the family through the devoted loyalty of an individual. This, in fact, is, in substance, what Joseph himself says in his closing words to his brethren.

Joseph turns into a good, for the family, for

the world, for his father, for the whole community involved, what his brothers had made ill. In his deed, through his skill, as well as through his suffering, the world is made better than it would have been had the treason never been done. This, I insist, constitutes his atoning work.

As to the brethren, — their treason is, of course, irrevocable. Joseph's deed does not wipe out that guilt of their own. But they can stand in the presence of their community and hear the distinctly reconciling word: "You have been the indirect cause of a good that, by the grace and the ingenuity of the community and of its faithful servant, has now been created, while, but for your treason, this good could not have been created. Your sin cannot be cancelled. Nor are you in any wise the doers of the atoning deed. But the community welcomes you to its love again, — not as those whose irrevocable deed has been cancelled, but as those whom love has so overruled that you have been made a source whence a spring of good flows."

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The repentant and thankful brothers can now accept this reconciliation, — never as a destruction of their guilt, but as a new and an objective fact whose significance they are willing to lay at the basis of a new loyalty. The community is renewed; the spirit has triumphed; and the traitors are glad that the irrevocable deed which they condemn has been made a source of a good which never could have existed without it. They are in a new friendship with their community, since the ends that have triumphed unite the new will with the old and evil will, through a new conquest of the evil.

Let my illustration pass for what it is worth. I still insist that an atonement of this sort, if it occurs at all, is a perfectly objective fact, namely, the creation by somebody of a definite individual good on the basis of a definite previous evil. That the total result, in a given case, such as that of Joseph, is something better than would have existed, or than would have been possible, had not that evil deed first been done, to which the atoning

deed is the response, — all this, I say, is a perfectly proper matter for a purely objective study. Such a study has the difficulties which attend all inquiries into objective values. But these difficulties do not make the matter one of arbitrary whim.

Moreover, if the atoning deed has brought, as a fact, such good out of evil that, despite the evil deed, the world is better than it could have been if the evil deed had not been done, — then this very fact has its own reconciling value, — a value limited but precious. The repentant sinner, seeing what, in Adam's vision, Milton makes the first human sinner foresee, will rightly find a genuine consolation, and a true reunion with his community, in thus being aware that his iniquity has been overruled for good.

A theory of atonement, founded upon this basis, is capable of as technical treatment as any other, and deals with facts and values which human wit can investigate, so far as the facts in question are accessible to us. Such a theory of atonement could be applied

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to estimate the atoning work of Christ, by any one who believed himself to be sufficiently in touch with the facts about Christ's supposed work. It would be capable of as technical a statement as our knowledge warranted.

This then, in brief, is my proposal looking towards an interpretation of the idea of atonement.

### X

Turning once more to view, in the light of this interpretation, the Christian doctrine of life in its unity, we may see how all the ideas now unite to give to this doctrine a touch both with the ethical and with the religious interests of humanity.

To sum up: As individuals we are lost; that is, are incapable of attaining the true goal of life. This our loss is due to the fact that we have not love. So the Master taught. But the problem is also the problem: For what love shall I seek? What love will save me? Here, if we restrict our answer to human objects, and deliberately avoid theol-



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ogy, the Christian answer is: Love the Community. That is, be Loyal.

Yet one further asks: What community shall I love? The answer to this question has been lengthily discussed. We need not here, at any length, repeat it. Speaking still in human terms, we are to love a community which, in ideal, is identical with all mankind, but which can never exist on earth until man has been transfigured and unified, as Paul hoped that his churches would soon witness this transfiguration and this union, at the end of the world.

So far as this ideal indeed takes possession of us, we can direct our human life in the spirit of this love for the community, far away as the goal may seem and be.

Yet what stands in the way of our being completely absorbed by this ideal? The answer is: Our enemy is what Paul called the flesh, and found further emphasized by "the law." This enemy is due to our nature as social beings, so far as this nature is cultivated by social conditions which, while

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training our self-consciousness, even thereby inflame our self-will. *This our social nature*, then, is the basis of our natural enmity both towards the law, and towards the spirit.

How can this natural enmity be overcome? The answer is: By the means of those unifying social influences which Paul regarded as due to grace. Genius, and only genius, — the genius which, in the extreme cases, founds new religions, and which, in the better known cases, creates great social movements of a genuinely saving value, can create the communities which arouse love, which join the faithful into one, and which transform the old man into the new. When once we have come under the spell of such creative genius, and of the communities of which some genius appears to be the spirit, — only then can we too die to the old life, and be renewed in the spirit. The early Christian community is (still speaking in human terms) one great historical instance of such a source of salvation. To be won over to the level of *such* a community is, just in so far, to be saved.

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But the will of the loyal is, in the purely human and practical sense, a will that we call free. The higher the spiritual gifts in question are, the greater is the opportunity for wilful treason to the community to which we have once given faith. The consequences of every deed include the great fact that each deed is irrevocable. And the penalty of wilful treason, therefore, is, for the traitor, — precisely in so far as he knows himself, and values his life in its larger connections, — an essentially endless penalty, — the penalty which he assigns to himself, — the fact of his sin.

For such penalty is there any aid that can come to us through the atoning deed of another? There is such aid possible. *In the human world we can never count upon it. But it is possible.* And sometimes, by the grace of the community, and by the free will of a noble soul, such aid comes. As a fact, the whole life of man gets its highest — one is often disposed to say, its only real and abiding — goods, from the conquest over ill. Atoning deeds, deeds that, through sacrifices, win

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again the lost causes of the moral world, not by undoing the irrevocable, nor by making the old bitterness of defeat as if it never had been, but by creating new good out of ancient ill, and by producing a total realm of life which is better than it would have been had the evil not happened, — atoning deeds express the most nearly absolute loyalty which human beings can show. The atoning deeds are the most creative of the expressions which the community gives, through the deed of an individual, to its will that the unity of the spirit should triumph, not only despite, but *through*, the greatest tragedies, — the tragedies of deliberate sin.

Through the community, or on its behalf, the atoning deeds are done. The individual who has sinned, but who knows of free atoning deeds that indeed have been done, — deeds whereby good comes out of his evil, — can be not wholly reconciled to his own past, but truly restored to the meaning of the loyal life. Upon the hope that such atoning deeds, if they have not been done because of our sins,

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may yet be done, all of us depend for such re-winning of our spiritual relations to our community as we have sinned away. And thus the idea of the community and the idea of atonement, — both of them, still interpreted in purely human fashion, but extended in ideal through the whole realm that the human spirit can ever conquer, form in their inseparable union, and in their relation to the other Christian ideas, the Christian doctrine of life. The Christian life is one that first, as present in the individual, offers to the community practical devotion and absorbing love. This same life, also present in the individual, looks to the community for the grace that saves and for the atonement that, so far as may be, reconciles. As incorporate in the community, or as incarnate in those who act as the spirit of the community, and who create new forms of the community, and originate atoning deeds, — as thus present in the community and in its creatively loyal individual members, the Christian life expresses the postulate, the prayer, the world-conquer-

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ing will, whose word is : Let the spirit triumph. Let no evil deed be done so deep in its treachery but that creative love shall find the way to make the world better than it would have been had that evil deed not been done.

The Christian doctrine of life consists in observing and asserting that these ideas have their real and distinctly human basis. This doctrine also consists in the purely voluntary assertion that, in so far as these ideals are not yet verifiable in human life as it is, this life is to be lived as if they were verifiable, or were sure to become so in the fulness of time. For that fulness of time, for that coming of the Kingdom, we both labor and wait.



## VIII

### THE MODERN MIND AND THE CHRISTIAN IDEAS



## LECTURE VIII

### THE MODERN MIND AND THE CHRISTIAN IDEAS

**T**HROUGHOUT our exposition of the ideas which, in their unity, constitute the Christian doctrine of life, we have intended to bring to light the relations of these ideas to the modern mind. Whenever we have attempted to define what we mean by the modern mind, we have been guided by two considerations. First, certain opinions and mental attitudes seem to be characteristic of leading teachers and of representative tendencies in our own day. Secondly, these prominent ideas of our day express general lessons which the history of mankind appears to us to have taught. We have accepted the postulate that history includes a more or less coherent education of the human race; and then have we viewed the modern mind as the present heir to this wisdom. And therefore some at least of the prominent ideas of our

day have seemed to deserve their prominence because they express part of the lesson of history.

How vague the resulting general conception of the modern mind and of its opinions necessarily is, we have acknowledged. But the conception is useful, simply because it enables us to summarize a type of convictions that possess indeed no supreme authority, but that are signs which men must interpret, and leadings which they must attempt to follow, if they are to take part in that collective human life which is to record itself in future history, and if our age is to teach any lesson to those who shall come after us.

The present lecture will be devoted to a summary of some of the lessons which the history of religion seems to have taught mankind, and to a general study of the bearing of these lessons upon our estimate of the present and the future of the Christian religion.

## I

There are three lessons of religious history, and three views prominent in recent discussion, which may be said to form part of the characteristically modern view of the meaning and destiny of religion.

First, religion is, historically speaking, a product of certain human needs; and its endurance depends upon its power to meet those needs. A religion which ceases to strengthen hearts and to fulfil the just demands of the human spirit for guidance through the wilderness of this world, is doomed; and in due time passes away; as the religion of Greco-Roman antiquity decayed and died; and as countless tribal and national religions have died, along with the social orders and cultures which they, in their day, sustained and inspired.

To use a metaphor which I believe to be neither trivial nor unjust: The gods, as man conceives the gods, live upon spiritual food; but, viewed in the light of history, they appear as beings who must earn their bread by supply-

ing, in their turn, the equally spiritual sustenance which their worshippers need. And unless they thus earn their bread, the gods die; and the holy places that have known them, know them no more forever. Let the ruins of ancient temples suggest the meaning that lies behind my figure of speech.

To make this assertion concerning the inevitable fortunes of all religions, is not to reduce the conception of religious truth to that which current pragmatism emphasizes: The relation between the two conceptions of religious truth which are in question will concern us in our later lectures. Here it is enough to say that I am not now deciding whether or no any religious truth is absolute; but am expressly limiting myself to the forms under which religious truth and error enter human history.

The needs of the worshippers determine, in the long run, the historical fate of religions. It is just, however, to add, that worshippers actually need an everlasting gospel; and that, if such a gospel were to be revealed to man, it



would not only satisfy human needs, but also contain absolute religious truth.

What I thus point out is simply meant to emphasize the assertion that the realm of religion is a realm, not of merely natural facts, but of will and of need, of desire, of longing, and of satisfaction. In other words, as it is now customary to state the case, religion is mainly concerned, not with facts that belong to the material world, but with values. Religion, meanwhile, aims at the absolute, but has no vehicle to carry its message to ourselves except the vehicle of human experience. The goal of religion is something beyond all our transient strivings. But its path lies through the realm of human needs.

And so, when a religion loses touch with human needs, it dies.

## II

Such is the first of the three modern opinions about religion to which I wish to call attention. The second may be stated in well-known terms. We live in an age when there have already

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occurred great recent changes in the spiritual needs whereof men are conscious. And in the near future still greater changes in these needs are likely to be felt.

Those changes in the needs of mankind which led to the decay and death of the religions of antiquity were petty in contrast to the vast transformations of the human spirit to which our modern conditions seem likely to lead within the next few centuries. Physical science and the industrial arts are altering the very foundations of our culture, of our social order, and of our opinions regarding nature. This alteration is now taking place at a rate for which no previous age of human history furnishes any parallel. Apart from chance catastrophes, which seem unlikely to happen, these processes of mental and of social change are likely to continue at a constantly increasing rate. In consequence, man's whole spiritual outlook will probably soon become different from any outlook that men have ever before experienced. This law of constantly accelerated

change promises to dominate the most essential interests of the civilization of the near future.

Concerning this second thesis which I here attribute to the modern mind, there is likely to be little difference of opinion amongst us. Many of us fear or deplore great spiritual changes. We all feel sure that such will soon occur. We know that, regarding all such matters, we have indeed no right to predict the future of humanity in any but the most general terms. Yet the prospect of very rapid and vast mental and social transformations, in the near future of civilization, is emphasized in our minds by innumerable considerations. Few of us are disposed to believe that, were we permitted to return to earth a very few centuries from now, we should find that even the dearest and oldest of the traditional features of our civilization had remained exempt from momentous and, to our minds, bewildering alterations.

The wildest flights of imagination regarding such possibilities often seem to us instructive,

just because they help us to read one great warning which the modern world gives us. This is the warning that nothing in human affairs is so sacred as to be sure of escaping the workings of this law of accelerated change.

### III

The third of the modern opinions which I here have in mind is closely associated with the two foregoing theses.

In ancient civilizations the religious institutions were often supported by the whole social power of the peoples concerned, so that the religious life of a nation belonged to whatever was most characteristic and most conservative about the civilization in question. In the Middle Ages, despite the enormous complexity of the Christian social order, the religious institutions still formed a very large part of what was most essential to European culture. But in recent times religious institutions—institutions of the nature of churches, of sects, or of religious orders—stand in a much less central position in our organized

social life than ever before. The tangible social importance of these institutions grows constantly less rather than greater. Had all the temples of a typical ancient city, and had all its priests and sacred places, been suddenly destroyed, so that none of the customary festivals and sacrifices could be carried on, we know how tragically the whole life of that city would have been disturbed, if not wholly paralyzed. But our modern industrial arts, our world-wide commerce, our daily business, our international relations, grow constantly more and more independent of any ecclesiastical and, in fact, of any public religious activities or institutions; so that, if all churches and priesthoods and congregations were temporarily to suspend their public functions and their visible doings, our market-places and factories and merchants and armies would continue to go on, for the time, much as usual.

In consequence, in the modern world, religion no longer has the effective institutional support of the whole collective social will,

but lives more apart from the other great social interests, and dwells more in a realm where internal faith rather than publicly administered law determines the range of its control. Hence when the social world is subject to forces which tend towards change, religion no longer stands at the point where the most conservative powers of society are massed. Religion must depend for its ability to resist change upon new weapons. Conservatism will no longer stand as its potent and natural defender. The human needs that it is to meet will be in a state of constant growth. The visible social organizations which have been its closest allies in the past can no longer be counted upon to preserve its visible forms. Once, when the temples and the gods were threatened, all the state rose as one man to defend them. For they were the centre of the social order. But henceforth commerce and industry will tend to take the place in men's minds which religious institutions once occupied. The things of the spirit must now be defended



with the sword of the spirit. Worldly weapons can no longer be used either to propagate or to preserve religion. Religion must find its own way to the hearts of the coming generations. And these hearts will be stirred by countless new cares and hopes. The human problem of religion will grow constantly more complicated.

Our three assertions of the modern mind regarding religion define for us, then, the religious problem of the future. No religion can survive unless it keeps in touch with men's conscious needs. In the future men's needs will be subject to vastly complex and rapidly changing social motives. In the future, religion, as a power aiming to win and to keep a place in men's hearts, can no longer permanently count on the institutional forces which have in the past been amongst its strongest supports. Its own institutions will tend, with the whole course of civilization, to come increasingly under the sway of the law of accelerated change. The non-religious institutions of the future, the kingdoms and the

democracies of this world, the social structures which will be used for the purposes of production, of distribution, and of political life, will certainly exemplify the law of accelerated change. And these social structures will not be under the control of religious institutions.

#### IV

Such are some of the lessons which history and the present day teach to the modern mind. Such are the conditions which determine the religious problems of the future. What shall we say of these problems, in their bearing upon Christianity?

In answer we can only take account of what we have gained for an understanding of our situation through our study of the Christian ideas. What we need is to look again at the sword of the spirit which is still in the hands of religion.

Were the strength of the Christian religion, in its contest with the coming modern world, mainly the strength of its already existing religious institutions, we can see at once

that all the three considerations which we have just emphasized would combine to make the prospects of the contest doubtful. It is true that no reasonable man ought for a moment to underestimate the actual vitality of the religious institutions of the Christian world, viewed simply as institutions. Assertions are indeed sometimes made to the effect that the Church, in all its various forms and divisions, or in very many of them, is already very rapidly losing touch, or has already hopelessly lost touch, with the modern world; and that here the process of estrangement between the Church and modern life is constantly accelerated. Some observers even venture to predict a rapid dwindling of all or most of the ecclesiastical institutions of Christendom in the near future. I suppose all such extreme assertions to be hasty and unwarranted. What we can see is merely this: that if the future of Christianity depended upon its institutions rather than upon its ideas, the result of changes that lie before us would be doubtful.

But our study of the Christian ideas has

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shown that the deepest human strength of this religion lies precisely in these ideas themselves. By the might of these ideas early Christianity conquered the Roman world. In the light of these ideas European civilization has since been transformed; and by their spirit it still guides its life. These Christian ideas, — not their formulations in the creeds, — not their always inadequate institutional embodiment, — and of course not any abstract statement of them such as our philosophical sketch has attempted, — these ideas constitute the sword of the spirit with which the Christian religion has to carry on its warfare. What makes its contest with the world of the future hopeful is simply the fact that, whatever creed or institution or practice may lose its hold on the modern mind, the Christian doctrine of life is the expression of universal human needs, — and of the very needs upon whose satisfaction the very life of every social order depends for its worth and for its survival. No progress in the industrial arts, and no massing of population

or of wealth, and no scheme of political reform, can remove from the human mind and the human heart these needs, and the ideas that alone can satisfy them. As for social changes, they will inevitably mean vast social tragedies. But such tragedies can only emphasize the very longings to which the Christian doctrine of life appeals. Whatever happens to any of the visible forms and institutions of Christianity, the soul of this religion can always defiantly say to itself:—

Stab at thee then who will;  
No stab the soul can kill.

With this interpretation of its mission present to its mind, it can face all its enemies with all the might of the spirit upon its side. It is this view of the relation between the Christian ideas and the modern world which I here wish to emphasize.

To accomplish this end, we have merely to sum up what our whole study has already taught us, and to contrast our views with those which some other accounts of the problem of Christianity have defended.

## V

Many, in our day, are disposed to think that the true, or perhaps also the last, refuge of religion is some form of mystical piety. Retire from the world; seek rest in what Meister Eckhart called the wilderness of the Godhead; win an immediate experience of the presence of the divine; surrender your individuality; let God be all in all to you; and then, — so such lovers of religion declare, — you will indeed win the peace that the world can neither give nor take away. By such a flight into Egypt the defenders of mystical religion hope to save the divine life from the hands of the Herod of modern worldliness. If you thus flee, they say, you may find what the saints of old found in their deserts and their cloisters. Modern civilization, with all its restlessness, will then become to you, so the partisans of mystical religion insist, a matter of indifference. Time, with all its mysterious futures and its endless changes, will for you simply pass away.



You will behold the end of all things. You will, so to speak, witness the judgment day. If Christianity is to triumph at all, such minds hold that it must triumph in the form of the mystical and utterly unworldly piety thus suggested. Such solutions of the problem of Christianity are at this moment freely offered for our need. Such solutions in plenty will be offered in the future.

Now I have, personally, a profound respect for the mystical element in religion. The problem of justly estimating that element is a problem as inexhaustible as it is fascinating. And I have no doubt that the mystics have indeed contributed indispensable religious values to our experience. I am eager to bring to light, in our future discussion, what some of those values are. But of this I am sure: Mystical piety can never either exhaust or express the whole Christian doctrine of life. For the Christian doctrine of life, in its manifoldness, in the intensity and variety of the human interests to which it appeals, is an essentially social doctrine. Private

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individual devotion can never justly interpret it.

Paul was a mystic; but he was a mystic with a community to furnish the garden where the mystical flowers grew; and where the fruits of the spirit were ripened, and where all the gifts of the spirit found their only worthy expression.

Without his community, without his brethren to be edified, and without charity to furnish the highest of the spiritual gifts, Paul, as he expressly tells us, would have accounted all his other gifts as making him but as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal. In all this he displayed that sound judgment, that clear common sense, to which the Christian doctrine of life has always been true. If Christianity, in the future, triumphs, that will be because some active and beloved community comes gradually more and more to take control of human affairs, and not because religion has fled to the recesses of any wilderness of the Godhead

As a fact, the mystical tendency in religion

is not the last, the mature, result, nor yet the last refuge, of piety. Mysticism is the always young, it is the childlike, it is the essentially immature aspect of the deeper religious life. Its ardor, its pathos, its illusions, and its genuine illuminations have all the characters of youth about them, characters beautiful but capricious. Mature religion of the Christian type takes, and must take, the form of loyalty, — the loyalty which Paul lived out, and described. Loyalty fulfils the individual, not by annulling or quenching his individual self-expression, but by teaching him to assert himself through an active and creative devotion to his community. Hence, while one may be thoroughly loyal, and therefore thoroughly religious, without having the gift or the grace of mystical illumination, no mystic can become truly religious unless, like all the really greatest of the mystics, — beyond all his illuminations, and besides all his mere experiences of fulfilment, or of the immediate presence of the Divine, — he attains to a strenuous, active loyalty which can overcome

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the world only by living in the community. The strength of Christianity, in its conflict with the future world of our changing social order, will therefore depend upon the fact that its doctrine of life permits it, and indeed requires it, to be as practical and constructive in its dealing with the problems of social life as the industrial arts are practical and constructive in their production of material goods. It is the Christian will, and not Christian mysticism, which must overcome the world.

### VI

If many thus suppose that the only solution of the problem of Christianity is a solution in terms of inner religious experience, and if they hold that the modern man should seek to interpret his religion mainly or wholly in a mystical sense, and should regard Christianity as a religion of private individual illumination, — there are many others who indeed vigorously reject this view. And some such defenders of the faith declare that, if Christianity is to survive at all, it can survive

only in the form of a literal acceptance of the principal dogmas of the historical Church.

Those Christian apologists who view our problem in this way declare that the modern man, and the civilization of the future, must face an old and well-known choice between alternatives. "Christianity," so they say, "declares itself to be a revealed religion. This declaration forms a part of its very essence. If one rejects the thesis that Christianity is a revelation of God's will, the only alternative is to view Christian doctrine as a mere system of ethical teachings, and thus to transform the Christian religion into bare morality. The future of Christianity depends wholly upon how this choice is made."

Our previous discussion now enables us to answer this frequent assertion of the apologists of Christian tradition, by insisting that, whatever the final truth about Christianity may be, the choice between alternatives which lies before the modern man is *not* justly to be stated in any such way as the one upon which these apologists so often insist

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In fact, the most significant choice for the modern man, in dealing with Christianity, lies between accepting and rejecting the Christian doctrine of life. And the Christian ideas whereof this doctrine of life consists can be both estimated and put into practice without presupposing any one view of God or of revelation, although such an estimate may indeed lead, in the end, to a theology. When stated in human terms, as we have thus far stated them in these lectures, the Christian ideas do not constitute merely an ethical system. Nor is their spirit that of a mere morality. For they relate to the salvation of man. That is, they include the assertion that human life ought to be guided in the light of a highest good which is not a merely wordly or natural good, and which cannot be obtained through mere skill in winning good fortune, or in successfully living the life of a human individual. For the Christian doctrine of life insists that the human individual, as he is naturally constituted, simply cannot live a successful life, but must first be transfigured.



The Christian ideas depend upon acknowledging what we have called the distinction between the two levels of human existence, and upon defining the highest good of man in terms of a transformation of our individual nature. A loving union of the individual with a level of existence which is essentially above his own grade of being is what the Christian doctrine of life defines as the way that leads towards the highest good. The whole of Christianity, as we have seen, grows out of this doctrine of the two levels.

But, from the very nature of the case, the vista which this doctrine of the two levels opens before us is at once human and illimitable. Man the individual is essentially insufficient to win the goal of his own existence. Man the community is the source of salvation. And by man the community I mean, *not* the collective biological entity called the human race, and not the merely natural community which gives to us, as social animals, our ordinary moral training. Nor by man the community do I mean the se-

ries of misadventures and tragedies whereof the merely external history of what is called humanity consists. By man the community I mean man in the sense in which Paul conceived Christ's beloved and universal Church to be a community, — man viewed as one conscious spiritual whole of life. And I say that this conscious spiritual community is the sole possessor of the means of grace, and is the essential source of the salvation of the individual. This, in general, is what the Christian doctrine of life teaches. The essential problem for the modern man is the question: Is this doctrine of life true?

Now the conception of man the spiritual community comes to our knowledge, *not*, in the first place, by means of any revelation from the world of the gods; nor yet through metaphysical reflection; although, when once we have this conception, it easily suggests to us dogmas, and easily seems to us as if it were a superhuman revelation, and also awakens an inexhaustible metaphysical interest.

The saving idea of man the community

comes to us through two kinds of perfectly human experience. First, it comes to us through the experience of the failure both of our natural self-will and of our mere morality to save us. This failure is due to the essential defect of the level upon which, by nature, man the social individual lives. Buddhism was founded upon this experience of the inevitable failure of the human individual to win his own goal. Paul, before his vision of the risen Lord converted him, learned in another form, and by perfectly human experience, the same negative lesson. Individual self-will is due to our insatiable natural greed, and is only inflamed by our merely moral cultivation.

Secondly, however, when such experience of the failure of a merely individual human existence has done its work, another sort of experience is needed to reveal to us the meaning of the life which belongs to the other human level, — to the level of the beloved community. This experience is the experience of the meaning of loyalty. It is this experience which, while always essentially

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human in the facts that it brings to our notice, opens up its endless vistas, suggests to us countless interpretations in terms of our relations to a supernatural world, and justly seems to be a revelation of something not ourselves which is worthy to be our guide and salvation. This experience of grace and of loyalty it is which awakens an inexhaustible metaphysical interest.

Since these ethical and religious and metaphysical vistas and interests are indeed endless, and since the life work and the insight to which they call us are constantly growing, there is no one way of defining in dogmatic formulas that view of God or of revelation to which they will always require us to adhere. Man the community, without ceasing to be genuinely human, may also prove to be divine. That is a matter for further inquiry. Loyalty, without ceasing to be a spirit that we learn through our human relations, may also prove to be a revelation from a realm of life which is infinitely superior to any human life that we now experience. In other words,

the higher of the two levels of human existence may prove to be, not only essentially above our individual level, but endlessly and quite divinely above that level. Man the community may prove to be God, as the traditional doctrine of Christ, of the Spirit, and of the Church seems to imply. But all such possible outcomes and interpretations, to which the Christian doctrine of life may lead, must be discovered for themselves. It is vain to narrow the choice that lies before the modern man and before the future social order to a choice between any one set of traditional dogmas on the one hand, and a mere morality on the other.

## VII

The Christian doctrine of life is therefore no mere morality, any more than it is a mere mysticism. And yet it does not depend upon first accepting any one form of theology or any one view about revelation. For one who wishes to judge fairly the Christian doctrine of life, the choice which is to be faced is there-

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fore this: *Either* a doctrine that individuals can work out their own salvation, *or else* a recognition that salvation comes through loyalty to the beloved community and through the influence of the realm of grace. Loyalty, — the beloved community, — the realm of grace, — these are indeed essential features of Christian doctrine.

The various views about revelation which have taken part in Christian history can be understood only in case this contrast between the two levels, and the practical significance of grace, of salvation, and of loyalty, have first been made clear in human terms. But if these human aspects of the Christian ideas have been grasped, one may then go on to the comprehension of what the Christian views about God have been trying, with varied symbolism, to present to the minds of men. One who approaches the problem of Christianity with the lore of the two levels of human existence well in mind will be ready for spiritual novelties. He will not limit himself to any simple pair of alternatives.



His creed will be neither a narrow moralism nor an equally narrow traditional dogmatism. He will perceive that we have endlessly new things yet to learn about what were, and still are, the sources of Christian doctrine and life, — the sources of the inspirations which guide humanity into novel undertakings, and the sources, also, of those traditions of the Church which symbolized so much more than they made explicit. He will also be quite ready to see that, despite all the changes of doctrine, the unity of the Christian doctrine of life has been and can be retained, — and retained just because Christianity is a doctrine of life, and hence a doctrine of that which preserves its meaning through change, and by virtue of change, so that the doctrine also must change its form as the life changes, but must nevertheless keep its unity precisely in so far as the changing life means something coherent and worthy.

And therefore, when we ask how the modern man, and how the future social order, stands related to the Christian ideas, our

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question really concerns the worth and the coherence which the Christian doctrine of life still retains, and will retain, in the midst of our vast and distracted modern world. Such a question is at best not easy to answer. But our foregoing studies have furnished a preparation for an attempt towards such an answer. I believe that some such preparation is needed, and will grow more and more necessary the more complex the situation of modern civilization becomes.

### VIII

Closely related to the effort to reduce our problem of Christianity to the simple choice of alternative, "Either Christianity is a revealed religion, or else it is a mere system of morality," there stands another interpretation of the same problem with which you are all familiar. This interpretation often expresses itself thus: "The modern man's relation to a Christian creed must depend upon his answer to the question, "Is, or is not the man Jesus, the founder of Christianity,

identical with the Christ, the God-Man, whom Christian tradition has acknowledged as Lord?" The modern man's choice, when thus interpreted, lies between the two alternative theses:—"*Either* Jesus, the founder of Christianity, was a man, and only a man; *or else* Jesus was the Christ, that is, was the God-Man."

Many apologists insist that this one choice between alternatives may be said to cover *all* that is most important in the problem of Christianity. For if the modern man, in presence of this choice, decides that in his opinion Jesus was the Christ, the decision brings him into close touch with all the best-known traditions of historical Christianity. The Christian religion is then acknowledged to be a divine process; and the work of the divine founder becomes the one source of human salvation. On the other hand, if Jesus was a man and only a man, then, however exalted his human life, or his doctrine, may have been, he stands upon essentially the same level as Socrates or as Confucius.

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For in that case he taught as an individual man, addressing his individual fellow-men; and the worth of his teaching must vary with the needs of persons and of periods. So the problem of the modern man is stated by many Christian apologists.

As a fact, the choice between alternatives which is thus formulated can be neglected by no serious student of our problem of Christianity. It is also true, however, that the choice cannot justly be made unless one takes account of considerations which tend greatly to widen our vista, and which define possibilities whereof those who believe in Christian tradition seldom take adequate account.

In answer, then, to the challenge: "*Either* you must believe that the founder of Christianity was only a man, *or else* you must accept Jesus as the Christ, the divine man," — we must first reply, I think, by an assertion which is as capable of a reasonable historical confirmation as it is often, at the present moment, neglected. It is indeed no new assertion, and many in the past have made it.

But our foregoing study, I think, helps us to view this assertion in a new light.

## IX

Whatever may be the truth about the person of Christ, and about the supposed supernatural origin of Christianity, the human source of the Christian doctrine of life, and also the human source of all the later Christologies, must be found in the early Christian community itself. The Christian religion, in its early form, is the work and expression of the Christian Church.

By the early Christian community I mean, first of all, the company of disciples who, after the Master's death, assembled in Galilee, and who, a little later, returned to Jerusalem. This community was absorbed, at first, in what it knew of the earliest visions of the risen Lord; and it narrated these visions in forms which the well-known gospel legends preserved for later Christian ages. This community also cherished the memory and the reported sayings of the Master. Erelong

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this same community began to experience those phenomena of collective religious fervor which it regarded as the work of the divine Spirit. It began its own task of propagating its faith. It made converts. Of these converts the greatest was the apostle Paul. Now this community, — not Paul himself as an individual, — not any one man, but this community, acting under the inspiration of its leaders, — is the source of all later forms of Christian life and faith. In this sense it is true that this community is the real human founder of Christianity.

It is of course also true that Jesus during his life had, as an individual man, taught a doctrine, and done a work, which made this first Christian community possible. In this sense it is correct to say that the man Jesus, in so far as he was merely an individual man, is the founder of Christianity. But when we say this, we must add that, so far as we know of the teachings of the man Jesus, they did not make explicit what proved to be precisely the most characteristic feature of Christianity,



—namely, the mission and the doctrine of the Christian community itself. The doctrine of Christian love, as the Master taught it, is not yet, in explicit form, the whole Christian doctrine of life. For the Christian doctrine of life is a doctrine which is unintelligible apart from the ideal of the universal community.

It is of course true, that had it not been for the life and for the teachings of Jesus, and had not the visions of the risen Lord been seen and held in memory, there would have been no Christian religion, and nothing for Paul to discover or to teach.

But it is also true that Christianity not only is a religion founded upon the idea of the divine community, — the Church, — but also is a religion whose human founder was rather the community itself, acting as a spiritual unity, — than it was any individual man whatever. Our doctrine of the two levels of human existence has explained what such a view of the matter means.

We know how the Church interpreted its

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own origin when it held that its actual originator was no mere individual man at all. In this opinion the Church was, as I hold, literally right, however you interpret the human person of Jesus.

The modern man, therefore, need not accept the early Christology of the Church in order to recognize that, since the founding of Christianity was due to the united spirit of the early Christian community, this founding was not wholly, or mainly, due to any individual man whatever.

Meanwhile, since the human founder Jesus gave the stimulus, the signal, — or, to use the now current Bergsonian language, set in motion the vital impetus, without which the Christian community, as this potent and creative human and spiritual union, would never have come into existence, — we can indeed also say that the man Jesus was, in this sense, the founder of Christianity. But we cannot say that, speaking of Jesus as an individual man, we know that he explicitly intended to found the Christian Church. For

he simply did not make explicit what he taught about the Kingdom of Heaven as a divine community. And the foundation of the Church, as a community, depends, humanly speaking, upon psychological motives — upon motives belonging not merely to individual but also to social psychology — upon motives which we cannot fathom by means of any soundings that our historical materials or our knowledge of social psychology permit us to make. We shall presumably never know the true sources of the Easter visions until we have learned the whole truth about that second, that higher, level of human existence upon whose reality I have insisted. *The psychology of the origins of Christian experience is thus social, and is not an individual psychology.*

These considerations with regard to Christian origins teach us that, deep as the historical mystery of the Christian origins remains, and will presumably for countless ages remain, neither the modern man of to-day, nor the men of the future, can be limited to the simple choice which the apologists emphasize.

## X

But, as you will say, What bearing have such historical comments upon the future prospects of the Christian faith?

I answer: These considerations tend to show us: first, that the Christian ideas do not demand for their interpretation and appreciation any one theory regarding the natural or supernatural origin of this religion; and secondly, that, in consequence, these ideas run no risk of being neglected or forgotten in consequence of the inevitable modern transformations of our ideas regarding nature and the supernatural.

Without sinking to the level of a mere moralism, Christianity presents to us a view of life which indeed arouses profound metaphysical inquiries; but which yet appeals to the most concrete and vital and present moral and religious interests. And without staking its existence upon the truth of any legends, Christianity, when fairly interpreted, presents to us, in the symbolism of its Chris-

tological myths, a doctrine which is capable of the most manifold religious and metaphysical interpretations, but which also expresses the perfectly human and the verifiable experiences that the loyal life everywhere illustrates.

We have seen that the social motives to which Christianity appeals are rooted in the very depths of our nature. They are the motives which make us naturally dependent upon life in communities, and morally lost and helpless without loyalty. These motives will not pass away. Christianity was that one among the religions which first invented an effective way of making the ideal of loyalty to the universal community not only impressive, but so transforming that for centuries the European world was under the sway of the institutions which gave expression to this ideal.

These institutions are now threatened; and the historical outcome of the vast conflicts upon which they are now entering cannot be foreseen. Moreover, in order to give to its doctrine of life not only a social expression, but an internal consistency and

intensity of religious meaning, Christianity, in its early days, recorded its legends and framed its creeds. Many of the resulting groups of ideas already seem strangers in our modern world; and they will probably seem to future generations, — as time goes on, — less and less literally acceptable. But now that we have seen something of what momentous and literally true, and permanently needed, spiritual discoveries concerning human life and its salvation the symbolism of these legends and of these creeds originally expressed, we are able to judge the Christian doctrine of life upon its own immortal merits, and to separate this judgment from any one theory, either about metaphysical or about historical truth.

Christianity will always arouse new critical and philosophical inquiries; its creeds will probably change unceasingly; its present institutions may in time wholly pass away. But in the new human life of the future ages, love and loyalty will not lose, but grow in human value, so long as man remains alive.



And the calm stern conscience wherewith the Christian faith has always condemned both our natural chaos of passion and our graver disloyalties, — this conscience will be increasingly needed; needed, not because men fear, but because men grow more self-possessed and clear in vision. The more reasonable, the more critical, the more far-seeing, and the more humane men become, the more will the ideas of the moral burden of the individual and of the irrevocable guilt of disloyalty appeal, not to the morbid moods, but to the resolute will and the clear self-consciousness of the enlightened man of the future.

Furthermore, as the spirit of science extends its influence, loyalty to the common insight and to the growth of knowledge will become prominent in the consciousness of the civilized man. For the scientific spirit is indeed one of the noblest and purest forms of loyalty.

The Christian virtues, then, will flourish in the civilization of the future, if indeed that civilization itself flourishes. For the more

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complex its constitution, and the swifter and vaster its social changes, the more will that civilization need love, and loyalty, and the grace of spiritual unity, and the will and the conscience which the Christian ideas have defined, and counselled, and that atoning conflict with evil wherein the noblest expression of the spirit must always be found.

The Christian virtues will survive if humanity triumphs in its contest with its own deepest needs and in its struggle after its own highest goods. But if the Christian virtues survive, they will find their religious expression. And this expression will be attended with the knowledge that, in its historical origins, the religion of the future will be continuous with and dependent upon the earliest Christianity; so that the whole growth and vitality of the religion of the future will depend upon its harmony with the Christian spirit. Whatever becomes of the present creeds and the present institutions, the man of the future, looking out over the wide vista of the ages, will know how near he is, despite

all time and change, to the spirit of Christianity.

So much, and only so much, our survey of the Christian doctrine of life permits us to assert concerning the relation of the Christian spirit to the modern mind, without essaying the grave tasks of a philosophical theory of the real world. Herewith the first part of our task is done. The second part calls for another method.



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